



Some symbolic manifestations of power in industrial organisations.

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SOME SYMBOLIC MANIFESTATIONS OF POWER IN INDUSTRIAL ORGANISATIONS

Thesis submitted to the Council
for National Academic Awards in
fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

DAVID GOLDING
Sheffield City Polytechnic
1979



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ABSTRACT

Some Symbolic Manifestations of Power in Industrial Organisations

David Golding

This thesis derives from experience of being a manager in several industrial organisations, and especially from a period spent working with a brief to intervene in an action research framework. The organisational experience, characterised by an increasing dissent generated in successive locations, thus prompted an investigation of the way of life of being a manager. The thesis in investigating this way of life, critically examines theories of power in organisations, with a view to establishing a coherent theoretical framework for conceptualising the dissension generated. Limitations of theories of power in the literature in fact mobilises an examination of more submerged aspects, as constituted in the symbol-rich nature of everyday organisational life, and an argument that such factors can be conceived as manifestations of power. In focusing upon such submerged aspects however, a more fundamental concern with the nature of knowledge - as the very means of expanding upon experience - is identified, and an examination of some of the problems of knowledge in carrying out social analysis, is undertaken in preparation for the investigation into the symbolic manifestations of power.

The examination of the problem of knowledge is approached through a review of some of the more prevalent formulations of what is to constitute sociology, and the epistemological and methodological implications of such formulations. A perspective is developed which subscribes to an emergent and reflexive epistemology and methodology, and a critical stance is adopted towards any purely empirical conception of knowledge. The criteria for knowledge is thus posited as a problematic to be investigated within a particular social enquiry. Problems of validity and relativism are thereby conceived as problems inherent in formulations and expansions of experience - as the essence of social being - and not specifically problems faced by scientific method.

The symbolic manifestations of power are approached by an examination of the derivation of the apparent assumptions of managers in relation to the symbolic world in which they operate, and which they construct. The thesis thus illuminates some of the neglected aspects of power in organisations and augments the predominance of work which has investigated the more observable aspects of the type, 'A has power over B if.....'

The thesis concentrates upon the idea of a 'capturing' of meaning contained in ambiguity, as distinct from its more usual destruction by 'refining-out'.

PREFACE

This thesis constitutes an account of the struggle to understand an apparent discrepancy between theories of power in organisations, as propounded in the literature, and my organisational experience. The nature of the discrepancy has been a long term interest/concern, but was conceptualised more formally in the most recent employment experience. This latest employment as a manager with a somewhat confusing brief to intervene in an action research framework, in fact epitomised my concern about the discrepancy, and the major part of the materials used in the thesis come from this period of employment. The thesis does however, draw upon previous organisational experience, and also uses data collected from other organisations during the construction of the thesis, and therefore there are many people to thank for the contributions and help they have given. Some of these can be named - and some cannot!

Most of those who can be named are in the academic world, and I would particularly like to thank my two research supervisors, D.Gowler, Professorial Fellow in the MRC Social and Applied Psychology Unit at the University of Sheffield, and Dr.H.S.Gill, Reader in Management Studies at Sheffield City Polytechnic. I am also grateful for all the helpful comments, advice and criticisms given by various members of staff and students at Sheffield City Polytechnic, and in particular, R.Grafton-Small, D.Jones, M.J.McAuley, Dr.M.J.Pedlar, Dr.J.S.Smith, and Dr.D.R.Tranfield. In addition I would like to thank W.B.Spiers, and T.Webster for helpful readings and criticisms which spanned the organisational/academic chasm.

Those who must remain anonymous because of their continuing employment in the organisations concerned, again I thank for the help given (whether they knew they were helping or not!) during my organisational periods, and also subsequently for reading and commenting on various drafts of ideas from which this thesis has been constructed. The process resulting from such continuing contact undoubtedly forms part of the emerging methodology, although I bear full responsibility for any shortcomings, no-one being associated with anything which they would not wish to acknowledge.

Thanks are due to my wife Anne who typed most of the manuscript, and also supported me in various additional ways! Acknowledgement is also made to the SSRC for the studentship which made this work possible, although it has to be said that the disturbing termination of my studentship (subsequently reinstated after equally disturbing protestations and deputations) in the 'panic cuts era' of 1979, undoubtedly led to the premature foreclosing of some lines of enquiry.

Parts of this thesis have already been published, and acknowledgement is made to the editors and proprietors of the following:

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Personnel Review. (For part of Chapter Five).

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INTRODUCTION-
THE ORIGINS AND BASIS OF THE THESIS

Undertaking Social Analysis

'For all their fierce egalitarianism, there is thus a significant element of stratification in Nuer society. This is largely based on the ascribed status of the dominant clans (dil), whose members the Nuer honour in their pastoral idiom with the title 'bull' (tut). "Wherever there is a dil in a village, the village clusters around him as a herd of cattle clusters around its bull." However status is not exclusively a hereditary endowment: it can also be achieved by outstanding mastery of all those virile pursuits which the warrior Nuer hold in high esteem.'

1

There are many often apparently insurmountable problems facing the prospective social analyst, and some of the more important of these can be highlighted by even a cursory examination of the above passage. The extract is from I.M. Lewis', 'Social Anthropology in Perspective', and concerns some aspects of stratification in Nuer society. The original study of the Nuer upon which Lewis draws, was carried out by Evans-Pritchard.²

One kind of question raised by the passage concerns the nature of the relationship between egalitarianism and stratification, but in fact this immediately raises another kind of question concerning what appears to be the Nuer's perception and presentation of themselves as egalitarian (suggested by '....their fierce egalitarianism,....') and the analyst's perception of stratification in the structure of

their social relationships. This is underlain by a whole series of questions such as - Are egalitarianism and stratification both socially ascribed concepts? - Are they thus socially ascribed solely by the analyst, or is egalitarian the way that the Nuer see themselves and stratified the way that the analyst sees them? What is the relationship between the phenomenon and the analytical concepts? - How do the concepts represent the situations? - And what is the relationship between the analysis and social ascription, and the way in which the Nuer see things? Thus in turn further kinds of questions are raised - How do we know that the analysis represents an 'accurate picture'? - And how do we define 'accuracy'? - How do we come to accept the analysis as an account of the way of life of the Nuer? - And indeed how do we come to accept Lewis' account of Evans-Pritchard's account? - And is it necessary to make a distinction between them? - And what kind of distinction?

These questions seem to operate at different levels. There are on the one hand, questions concerning the way in which the Nuer manage the relationship between inheritance and achievement of dominant clans status, and on the other hand there are questions concerning the way in which the readers of the analysis come to know that relationship.

This thesis will be particularly concerned with the way in which the second type of question, influences the formulation of the first kind of question, and with the more general but fundamental issues (such as the nature of science, objectivity, truth, etc) underlying the second kind of question. The thesis will thus be concerned with

carrying out social analysis whilst illuminating some of the presenting problems facing any such analysis. My interest in these kinds of questions undoubtedly stems from my personal development (and the circumstances which led to an engineer attempting social analysis of this nature) and it will be useful to locate the thesis in my previous experience at the outset.

My engineering experience gave rise to a concern about the traditional separation between discovery and utilisation. The idea that scientists were more concerned with the actual discovery whilst engineers were concerned with applying what had been discovered, seemed to me to be built upon a questionable construction of specialisation and the division of labour, which did not conceptually follow. This is amply demonstrated in the notion of invention, which contains the seeds of both discovery and application, but is conceptually sterile if either is removed. The confusion that this causes to the concept of scientist and engineer is paramount, but generally resolved for practical purposes by the inventions of engineers being defined as of inferior status to the inventions of scientists, in accordance with the higher esteem in which scientists are placed in relation to engineers (discovery being seen as more exciting - and demanding.) The invention of the hovercraft is a good example of the irrelevance of delineations between discovery (of the scientific principle and basis of hovering) and utilisation (travel) since until the two are put together we demonstrably do not have a hovercraft.

The differing status afforded to engineers and scientists

(notwithstanding that both might complain about their status in relation to other professions) seemed therefore to be built upon a conceptually unsustainable schism. Furthermore, the whole question of discovering what is possible, is so inexorably bound up not only with what is practicable (eg practical problems of scale - whether economic or technological - such as magneto-hydrodynamic power generation ³) but with what is desirable (eg nuclear power generation?). The separation of discovery from utilisation, thus seemed to me to be not only conceptually unsound, but also morally questionable. Indeed moral problems abound such a separation.

This concern led to an interest in the means by which such a schism could be sustained against apparently obvious contradictory evidence. Such an interest took me into a study of the social world, albeit spasmodic and theoretically unformulated, but it soon became apparent that any attempt to make a similar differentiation between discovery and utilisation of knowledge about social phenomena was even more fraught with difficulty. I foundered at this stage on how it was possible to know anything about the social world.

The grounding of these thoughts and tentative formulations in everyday life can be illustrated by the way in which I tried to account for some rather strange events related to me by a neighbour.

Mrs. Pendlebury's Spiders

The Pendleburys' were a retired couple who had recently moved into the area (the Yorkshire Coast) from the industrial north east. They had moved as part of a retire-by-the-sea strategy at the time of Mr.

Pendlebury's retirement. Sometime after their arrival we had a garden fence conversation in which Mr. Pendlebury was relating his wartime experiences in Africa - an 'all flies, shit and sand' experience - when Mrs. Pendlebury appeared at the garden fence and entered the conversation. She related how when living in the north east some years ago she had discovered an enormous tarantula in her kitchen. She described how she ran out of the house and called for a neighbour, who came, and after the initial shock managed to kill the horrendous beast. She accounted for the presence of such a non-indigenous species by the fact that she had just bought a large bunch of bananas from the travelling shop.

The telling of this story so alarmed my wife who had appeared during the relating of the story, that we ate no bananas for several weeks. In fact it was only months later that we began to re-establish some kind of trusting relationship with our own travelling greengrocer. This re-integration was speeded up by the occurrence of another sighting.

My wife who had become somewhat preoccupied with destroying the nations population of spiders, had killed an extra large garden spider and was relating this to the Pendleburys in a further garden fence conversation, when Mrs. Pendlebury interrupted with an account of a tarantula found the previous evening on the curtains in her living room - again accounted for by the incidence of bananas. I visibly witnessed the diminution of my wife's fear of finding such a bird eating monstrosity, as two shades of colour returned to her cheeks. At last life on the Yorkshire Coast was returning to normality, for even my wife's fear was not such that it could support

the nature of such coincidences, or a tropical invasion of such proportions.

So what of Mrs. Pendlebury's accounts? It did at least provide fuel for my explorations of the questions about knowledge etc and I began to examine the nature of the kind of question which might be posed to Mrs. Pendlebury to which she might answer - 'Yes I once had a tarantula in my house.' What kind of data is then Mrs. Pendlebury's account? - What can it tell us?

It would not be difficult to envisage a scientific investigation into the incidence of tarantulas imported with bananas. Clearly Mrs. Pendlebury would respond positively there, and assuming that she indicated only one occurrence this raises the question of the effect of such data on the investigation. With the additional knowledge that Mrs. Pendlebury is inclined to 'see' spiders - clearly not very reliable. Yet the investigators would not have that knowledge and so what kind of results?.....

Alternatively a psychoanalytic investigation might find Mrs. Pendlebury's multiple accounts very useful, but to get that knowledge (of multiple incidences) some greater degree of contact with Mrs. pendlebury would be required - in analysis? Again an investigation into the responses people make to locate themselves in their social milieu might find Mrs. Pendlebury's accounts revealing (ie. in the way individuals construct their sense of self in relation to the social world in which they exist, and the reflexive nature of this structuring.)

Such posturing is however to put the cart before the horse, and in any real investigation the incidences of Mrs. Pendleburys is the problem to face. How is it possible to investigate the social world given the propensity for respondents to give an account which may be so ephemeral? Sampling is not a sufficient answer, since investigations about the social world are seldom concerned with such specific and unusual subjects as the incidence of tarantulas. In social investigation it is much more likely that everyone is his own Mrs. Pendlebury.

Before developing this aspect further it will be useful to identify a particular concern about certain facets of the social world which troubled me and within which a discussion of the criteria for knowledge can be located, to avoid unnecessary abstraction.

This concern again stems from past experience, particularly organisational experience, and to illustrate the grounding of this, an event occurring in the Company with which I was most latterly employed, Wenslow Manufacturing Co., will be introduced. In this Company I was employed in an action-research role,⁴ but seemed to be more or less paralysed from actually doing anything. A central concern therefore was to illuminate this paralysis.

Jack Fisher's Tie

Jack Fisher, the Administration Manager in this Organisation, related to me how every evening when leaving his office he would lock the top left-hand drawer (the confidential drawer) in his desk, but before doing so would carefully place a perfectly flat file on the top of the other contents in the drawer. He would then lay a pencil laterally

on top of the file about eight inches back into the drawer, and very carefully close the drawer so as not to disturb the pencil. When questioned why he did this, he replied that it was his detection system, since anyone opening the drawer would cause the pencil to roll off the file backwards, and by opening his drawer slowly every morning, he could then determine whether or not anyone had been in the drawer during the night. When asked why he should want to do this he replied, 'How long have you worked here.....?'

Asked if the pencil was often found at the back of the drawer he nodded his head and said that now he'd learnt to use the system by purposely leaving in the drawer items which he wished to communicate. For instance he'd recently produced some figures that indicated that his Department was doing pretty well in financial terms, and he'd realised that the best way to communicate this fact was to leave the figures in the drawer. That gave 'them' the message that he was on the ball - that he was efficient and conscious of the need to institutionalise control procedures. 'Without shouting about it.... 'You have to be a psychologist' 'let them know that you regard control systems as routine' 'not worthy of bringing their attention to the fact that you're doing it!.'

This apparent combination of paranoia (in the adoption of 007 methods in what is supposed to be a rational exchange based arena) with working-the-system (to communicate to 'them') seemed to highlight the essentially idiosyncratic and symbolic nature of the social world. Indeed the importance of this symbolic nature was further underlined in a subsequent conversation with Jack Fisher. Several days after the above conversation I met him on the corridor leading to the Managing

Director's office. He stopped for a few moments to tell me that he was on his way to see the M.D. I enquired why, and he said to report upon the difficulties he was having with recruiting staff for his Department. I asked what reasons he would give for the difficulties and he said, 'oh ... pay, I suppose.' I asked why he didn't just tell the Managing Director that the Company's bad reputation as an employer was a large factor. He laughed and said 'you must be joking' 'you don't give explanations to him' 'in fact you don't go in there to talk - you go to listen.'

He then drew my attention to his tie and said, 'This is how I talk to him.' The tie had a rather attractive motif on it somewhat reminiscent of an Association such as a professional body or Institution. He allowed me to puzzle for a moment and then turned his tie round at right angles. The motif was transformed into a stylish Old English scroll which read clearly, 'Piss Off! '

The concern about the possibility of knowledge (given the 'strangeness' of Mrs. Pendlebury's accounts) was thus increased by a practical necessity for knowledge about the social world stemming from the account given by Jack Fisher. This necessity stemmed for me, not so much from the strangeness of Jack Fisher's account, in fact the account seemed 'normal' according to my experience of what was required to survive as a manager at Wenslow Manufacturing Co., but from the discontinuity of that experience and available theories concerning the essence of competent membership of such organisations. In fact I turned to the literature on power in organisations as a means of formulating my experience, mainly because this seemed to link

Jack Fisher's world to my own problems of paralysis in trying to carry out my action research brief, but the theories propounded did not seem to fit with my experience, generating instead a feeling that perhaps after all, I was the real Mrs. Pendlebury.

This then forms the starting point of this thesis. These are some of the factors which led to me investigating the 'way of life' of managers in organisations such as Wenslow Manufacturing Co., as a means of formulating my experience about concerns such as exemplified by the Jack Fisher story, and to arguing that such incidents can be regarded as manifestations of power in organisations. The more underlying concern with knowledge, particularly in view of the identification of the importance of the idiosyncratic, symbolic world indicated by the Jack Fisher story suggested that the investigation would have to be undertaken in a manner which treated epistemology and methodology as problematic.

Aims of this Social Analysis

The issues raised in the two stories of Mrs. Pendlebury and Jack Fisher seemed then to capture the essence of some of the problems facing social analysis, on the one hand developing understanding of social life by conceptualising and formulating the ways of life (Jack Fisher) whilst on the other hand explicating the criteria for what is to count as valid in representing that social life (Mrs. Pendlebury).

This seemed to equate to the central issues raised in the discussion about the life of the Nuer at the beginning of the chapter and suggested

that the way to proceed should consist of doing social analysis whilst concurrently explicating the criteria for knowledge. Gellner has in fact expressed this succinctly.

.....'Both the main streams - on the one hand the codification of the process of knowledge, and the attempt to formulate the criteria of knowledge; on the other hand the sustained investigation of our human social situation - are highly meritorious. The way forward seems to me to consist of a kind of confluence of them at a more sophisticated level.'

5

This is not to say that every postulation, every sentence, should be examined minutely (held up to the light!) against some specific criteria, but rather that the thesis itself constitutes the process of emerging, and represents the investigation of the criteria in its essence.

If that represents a way to proceed, it does still leave something of the question of why proceed - why do social analysis? The thesis will thus also be concerned with this problem in that the explication will examine the nature of various conceptualisations of the human condition as constituting a search for meaning - for liberation - for understanding - etc, and the extent to which such forces are a necessary part of being human. The thesis is a contribution to the study of the human social condition within an explication of the criteria for knowledge, driven by factors of the human ontological condition which themselves are a subject for investigation. More specifically, the thesis aims to investigate the criteria for knowledge, and the reasons for carrying out such

an investigation, within the conceptual analysis of theories of power in organisations in relation to the writers organisational experience. The thesis aims to examine the neglect of societal and historical context in much of the work done on power in organisations, and seeks to construct an alternative perspective based on the symbolic manifestations of power (exemplified in for instance myths, rituals and ideologies) which it is argued needs to be considered in addition to the more traditional perspectives of the type, 'A has power over B, if

Distinctions made between management research and sociological research have presented something of a problem during the construction of this thesis, indeed it has been suggested by some that the thesis should not be submitted from a Management Department but rather from a Sociology Department. ('..... why on earth are you doing this in a Management Department?', ' well yes but what is there in this that Managers can use?', '..... but this isn't management research.') It would I believe be fairly easy to defend doing sociology from a Management Department, but to do so would merely be to approach the world from the same kind of rigidly categorised perspectives of the critics. Whereas it is not necessary to be able to closely define sociology to appreciate that the subject matter has far reaching implications for the basis of management research (e.g. the study of the way in which individuals structure and organise their worlds is at the heart of the way in which management is practised). Nor is it necessary to make extravagant claims for the basis of sociology as being the cornerstone about which everything else revolves (e.g. Queen of the

social sciences arguments). It is sufficient to be aware that, insofar as sociology and management are seen as different, the nature of the questions concerning the ways in which problems are to be settled, and the extent to which these problems have been identified are similar (perhaps sometimes the same) and that moreover management as a discipline is often dependent upon the explication of some sociological concepts for its existence (e.g. the nature of management is ineluctably located, conceptually, in a science of society). Furthermore the perception of sociology and management as being (always) things which are identifiably different may itself be an unnecessary confusion, particularly if management is approached from a broader base (e.g. management as not simply concerned with how some - the managers - manage others, but with how all perform the awesome task of managing everyday life).

Another similar criticism made of my work has been that it should be submitted in a Philosophy Department. The assumptions behind this kind of view seem to me to be at the heart of the traditional separation between philosophy and other disciplines (e.g. 'sciences') and the problems of such a separation for sociology are taken as a matter for enquiry in the thesis. A further criticism has been that the thesis is not really research ('.... but this isn't sociology you remind me of another ex-engineer I know, who when asked who is the greatest sociologist of all time, answers, "Balzac"') since the concern is with retrospective data and therefore research instruments could not be designed before undertaking the work. Thus it is suggested, research frames could not influence the data to be collected.

It would similarly be possible to refute this criticism from within the rigid categorisations implied, since the subject of the thesis clearly emerged during the action research period of employment and most of the data were collected according to frameworks developed at that time. In fact the period of employment at Wenslow Manufacturing Co., concerning as it did a brief to intervene in an action research role (although undoubtedly suffering from lack of awareness of the implications of such a brief) occurring at a time when most of what is in this thesis was largely unformulated, was used to collect data specifically with a view to shedding light upon why I was suffering paralysis of my brief. It is not therefore surprising that power became a central concern. Thus whether conceptualised as hypothesis-testing (I hypothesise that it is because I lack power that I am paralysed) or following domain assumptions (about power) it could be argued that the investigation was not in fact concerned with retrospective data. Such a refutation however would again rely upon the somewhat rigidly categorised perspectives of these critics, and the thesis instead takes such criticisms as a topic for investigation within the examination of the criteria for knowledge.

The Organisations

The Organisations from which the materials for this thesis are taken are three organisations in which the writer has worked during the preceding five years, plus six other organisations from which data has been collected during the research. The names of all companies, persons and some job titles have been changed to protect the identity of those involved. The Companies are:-

1. Wenslow Manufacturing Company.

This Organisation is the last company in which the writer worked, and is the one involving the action research role where the presently developed exposition emerged into a more coherent formulation of past experience. Wenslow Manufacturing Co. is a medium sized engineering manufacturing concern in the North of England. The Company employs about 2000 people and has an annual turnover of around £20 million. The Company represents the British Division of an American owned world wide multi-national Corporation although there are no purposely employed American Nationals in the Company in this country. This absence is generally accounted for by the exceptional profitability of the Company (return on net assets being maintained above 30% during the bad years of the mid 1970's) which in turn is usually attributed to the high quality of the products.

I was employed in the Personnel Department for approximately 15 months, and my job had the dual role of doing action research and also managing the recruitment operation in the Company. Material from Wenslow Manufacturing Co., appears mainly in Chapters five, seven and eight of the thesis.

2. Fielding and Company

This Company is a private family concern in the electrical contracting industry in the same town in the North of England as Wenslow Manufacturing Company. The Company has approximately 100 employees

and has a national reputation for high quality workmanship. I was employed by the Organisation as a Design Engineer for approximately 14 months. Material from Fielding and Company appears in Chapter six of the thesis.

3. North Midlands Board.

North Midlands Board is an Area Board of a public utility organisation, one of twelve Area Boards in England and Wales. North Midlands Board employ approximately 8,000 people. and have an annual turnover of around £100 million. I was employed in the Eastern District of the Board, as an Engineer, for $6\frac{1}{2}$ years. Material from North Midlands Board appears in Chapters six, seven and eight of the thesis.

4. Penborough Corporation.

Penborough Corporation is the Local Authority in the same Northern town as Wenslow Manufacturing Co. and Fielding and Company. During the research I was supplied with some correspondence regarding an incident in the Administration Department at Penborough Corporation, by an employee who asked me to account for the 'strange logic of the Organisation.' This material and analysis appears in Chapter six of the thesis.

5. Five manufacturing companies in the Chemical Industry.

Data was collected from twelve industrial relations practitioners in five companies in the North of England concerning the way in

which they accounted for their jobs when questioned about what they understood by industrial relations. The practitioners consisted of one Managing Director, two Personnel Directors, four Industrial Relations/Personnel Managers, one Line Manager, one Works Convenor and three Shop Stewards. This material appears in Chapter nine of the thesis.

The Thesis

The layout of the thesis derives from my perception of the way in which certain issues required examination before investigation of logically succeeding problems could be undertaken. Thus the examination of the criteria for knowledge occupies the whole of chapters two and three, in preparation for the substantive approach to the investigation of power, which commences with chapter four.

In fact chapter two begins with a discussion of some of the main ways in which carrying out social analysis has been conceived. This is undertaken in order to locate the examination of the criteria for knowledge with respect to the underlying theories and assumptions of knowledge inherent in the various programmes. This foundation is then used to develop in chapter three a more specific examination of the actual theories of knowledge which have been postulated, and the discussion is then focused upon the immediate problem of procedure in carrying out social analysis. The first part of the thesis is therefore involved with a clarification and construction of a base upon which the enquiry can proceed.

Chapter four is concerned with a review of the literature on power

in organisations and sets the scene for the consideration of my organisational experience which occupies the following five chapters. The presentation of this counterposed experience, which illuminates the discrepancy with theories propounded in the literature, in concentrating on the submerged aspects of organisational life (i.e. the symbolic infrastructure) is thematic. In chapter five the presentation is commenced with a discussion of the notion of the right to manage and the assumptions underlying such a notion.

This is developed in chapter six into an examination of the way in which the right is transformed into a duty and an absolute sovereignty. Chapter seven concentrates upon the means by which an absolute, like the sovereignty of management, is produced and maintained as a self evident part of organisational life, and chapters eight and nine centre upon a consideration of the reinforcing and institutionalising mechanisms which serve to underline the absolute. Chapter ten recapitulates some of the main components of the argument and identifies some of the implications.

The central problem which is addressed in the thesis then, stems from my organisational experience epitomised by the period of employment in which I was involved in action research, and focuses upon the search for understanding as to why I seemed to be paralysed in achieving anything in that framework. The conceptualisation of this problem as an issue of power led directly to this thesis, and the discrepancy between theories of power in the literature and my organisational experience resulting in an identification of the importance of submerged factors led to the investigation of the

criteria for knowledge. Both these conceptualisations will be questioned during the ensuing argument.

CONCEPTIONS OF THE NATURE AND STATUS OF SOCIAL ENQUIRY

Questions of what is to count as valid knowledge and the problem of how to proceed in acquiring such knowledge are then, fundamental difficulties in sociology. The difficulties are not unique to sociology, rather they are specific to the human situation, but they are particularly critical to the extent that the subject concerns the human social situation. Given the potentially crippling nature of the difficulties it is of prime importance for any contributor to sociology to attempt to formulate a tenable approach to the problems, although those who build their work upon less problematic programmes will undoubtedly regard such an exposition as an epistemological diversion!

In order to explicate the nature of the difficulties it is necessary to critically examine the nature of the discipline (or 'skin trade' as O'Neil puts it ¹) as conceived, constructed and developed by practitioners, since the question of what constitutes sociology is inevitably entangled with the question of the possibility of sociology (as conceived) which in turn must underlie the question of how sociology is possible.

This chapter then is concerned with a critical examination of some of the ways in which sociology has been delineated by practitioners. The first section concentrates upon conceptions of sociology as a science and particularly on the origins of a postulated science of

society, and the second section focuses upon the emphasis placed by social analysts upon theory and the apparently central nature of theory in formulations of sociology. The examination develops with a discussion of ways in which some practitioners have attempted to delineate sociology by arguing that it can be distinguished from art (sociology as not-art) and concludes with an analysis of the way in which the identity of sociology has been determined by the argument of some philosophers that carrying out social analysis is demonstrably distinguishable from philosophy (sociology as not-philosophy). This framework is not a representation of different sociologies (there are enough straw men without creating more) rather it is constructed for analytical purposes in an attempt to transcend the somewhat restricting normative assumption that sociology is science (which is not to suggest that sociology is not science) and to isolate for discussion certain emphases to be found in sociological writings.

Scientific Conceptions of Social Enquiry

Commentators accounting for the origins of sociology generally point to the surfacing of questions about social organisation stemming from the disturbing political and economic changes which occurred in Nineteenth Century Europe. The origins are thus seen to derive from a desire to develop a science of society in terms related to or built upon the prevalent versions of natural science. Criticism of such versions of sociology however do not always relate the articulation of the central concerns to the particular experience of political and economic change in each country.

Criticisms thus lose the essential context of the programmes set forth and in so doing detract from the historical importance in vain attempts to extract significance. Indeed as Rex² has argued, to capture the essence, the particular versions need also to be located especially with respect to the more immediate intellectual antecedents of the significant figures. Thus for a fuller understanding of the development of Comte's version of sociology one needs to examine the influence upon him of people like St. Simon. Similarly Adam Smith's influence on Spencer is crucial.

This Section is concerned with tracing the versions of sociology developed by Comte and Spencer, and in the location of these versions in their particular historical circumstances and antecedent influences in order to establish the origins of scientific conceptions of sociology. The argument is developed historically through Durkheim and the Logical Positivists to present day versions of sociology as science.

Sociology as conceived by Comte then, was to see the completion of the historical development of the scientific disciplines. The history of science was seen by Comte as a progressive evolution of scientific knowledge moving from disciplines relating to the natural world, through disciplines relating to mans involvement and control of the natural world, towards the study of man himself.³

The logic of this development rested on the assumption that successive sciences presuppose the laws of previously developed sciences, and sociology (conceived as a kind of social physics) presupposes the laws of physiology.

'Thus we have before us Five fundamental Sciences in successive dependence, Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry, Physiology and finally social Physics.'

4

The history of this development was seen to rest on the idea of 'a great fundamental law.'

'The law is this, that each of our leading conceptions, each branch of our knowledge, passes successively through three theoretical conditions: the Theological, or fictitious; the Metaphysical, or abstract; and the scientific, or positive.'

5

This 'Law of Three Stages' reflects Comte's affinity for science and the nature of a scientific knowledge, which formed the only basis for valid knowledge. The positive component was to be identified as something which was concrete as distinct from fictitious or abstract and therefore was to represent a significant advance on the basis of knowledge. Things were to be real and actualised because they were positive, having passed through and left behind the less concrete stages, although the battle scars of the arduous journey remained.

'There is no science which, having attained the positive stage, does not bear the marks of having passed through the others.'

6

Thus the 'positive philosophy' is conceived as rising up out of opposition to that of the 'Superstitious and scholastic systems

which had hitherto obscured the true character of all science.⁷

The character of the positive philosophy entailed the regarding of all phenomena as subjected to invariable natural laws, and the aim was to pursue therefore an accurate discovery of these laws, with the reduction of such laws to the smallest possible number.

The positing of social physics as the completion of the evolution of the scientific disciplines presents then a version of a social science which is conceived as a development of other sciences and in turn rests on a programme built upon the methods of the natural sciences. Social science is thus seen as a more methodologically complicated but dependent kind of natural science.

The conceiving of social science in these terms, however, did not necessarily involve commencing right away with natural science methods. There were problems of how to achieve such results but the positing of such an aim was the important thing. Comte was indeed particularly aware of the great problems set by his programme.

'I am not blind to the vast difficulty which this requisition imposes on the institution of positive sociology, obliging us to create at once, so to speak, observations and laws on account of their indispensable connection, placing us in a sort of vicious circle, from which we can issue only by employing in the first instance materials which are badly elaborated and doctrines which are ill-conceived.'⁸

The issuing from this vicious circle is then at the heart of constructing a positive programme, in order to replace the previously vague and incoherent social observations. The aim is positive, the

method one concerned with overcoming difficulties, but the positive method can be judged only in action, and not in itself apart from the work in which it is employed. It is not possible Comte argued to yet explain the logic of procedure apart from their applications, and whether or not there could be a true (a priori) method of investigation independent of a philosophical study of the science is questionable. Thus the way to proceed seems to be to examine the relation of sociology to the natural sciences whilst investigating the social world by the methods peculiar to sociology viz - Observation, Experiment and Comparison.

In Comte's schema, observation of any kind of phenomena must be directed and finally interpreted by some theory, since science can use only those observations which are connected, at least hypothetically, with some law. Such a connection differentiates between scientific and popular observation, but by the guidance of a preparatory theory the observer would know what he ought to look for 'in the facts before his eyes.'⁹ According to Comte, experimentation is not, as might be supposed, entirely inappropriate in sociology although it is seen to be of inferior value,¹⁰ due to the difficulties of isolating the conditions and results of 'disturbances' due to spontaneous alteration. These undetermined alterations do not however have any effect on the scientific value if the elements are known. They become known by examining 'pathological cases' of disturbed natural states.

In this scheme, comparison is to be an examination of different co-existing states of human society on various parts of the earth's surface to produce a 'general social evolution.'¹¹

The inherited tradition of Comte thus includes a clear programme for a positive science which is strongly founded in a natural science model of the day although involving a more complicated construction. Indeed the positive programme is conceived of as being immensely difficult involving an (at least potentially) vicious circle. The aims are clear. The method inseparable from the action - proceed by observation/experiment/comparison, whilst examining the relation of sociology to natural science.

Spencer also developed a version of sociology which was based on the idea that the scientific method was the only method of human knowledge.

'.....prevision is possible, and therefore some subject matter for Science.'¹²

Spencer's sociology derives from a similar ascendancy kind of model to Comte's in which sociology is seen as a culmination of all that is possible in knowledge of the world. In contrast to Comte however Spencer's sociology is not merely rooted in a methodological unity, but is a manifestation of the essentially evolutionary nature of the cosmos. Sociology arises not simply from the culmination of the evolution of scientific method but in an important way is the very essence of evolution ('from incoherent homogeneity to coherent heterogeneity.')¹³ The emergence of a sociology is thus an expression of the evolution of society.

'The study of sociology (is) the study of Evolution in its most complex form.'¹⁴

Spencer was however also aware of the great difficulties for a science of society.

'.....In his capacity of inquirer he should have no inclination towards one or other conclusion respecting the phenomena to be generalised: but in his capacity of citizen, helped to live by the life of his society, imbedded in its structure, sharing in its activities, breathing its atmosphere of thought and sentiment, he is partially coerced into such views as favour harmonious co-operation with his fellow citizens. Hence immense obstacles to the Social Science, unparalleled by those standing in the way of any other science.'

15

In fact, despite Spencer's view of the idea of sociology being a manifestation of organic evolution, he was at pains to point out the dangers of physiological analogy. A law producing science which is built upon an evolutionary model of progress in which sociology follows and relies upon the development of the laws of a biological science, does not necessitate a sociology which follows a biological organic model.

'Here let it once more be distinctly asserted that there exist no analogies between the body politic and a living body, save those necessitated by that mutual dependence of parts which they display in common.'

16

Spencer's evolutionary perspective was indeed not a simple organic analogy, he being very much aware of the potential contradictions in a model of theoretical integration in a world which was viewed as developing increasing differentiation. The evolutionary differentiation (eg. the increasing division of human labour) was seen to be

counterbalanced by a progressive integration of individuals within more comprehensive associations of men.¹⁷ Thus the man makes society - society makes man, action/systems dichotomy was anticipated.

'This is a misapprehension naturally fallen into and not quite easy to escape from; for to get out of it the citizen must simultaneously conceive himself as one whose will is a factor in a social evolution, and yet as one whose will is a product of all antecedent influences, social included.'¹⁸

The escape is undoubtedly by way of developing a social science.
The way to proceed, one of overcoming difficulties ('obstacles').

Such early versions of sociology conceived of as representing a pinnacle of knowledge as man constructed a formal basis for assembling discovered experience about his world and about himself, formed then a coherent part of a logical evolutionary history of scientific knowledge. The development of the idea that sociology was a science was firmly located in the very ideas which gave its birth. It was an inevitable feature of advancing society. Man historically reaches an evolutionary stage in which social knowledge about himself and his society is necessary - is inevitable. The desire for such knowledge is in itself an expression of that very evolution. That such knowledge should be conceived of as constituting/requiring scientific status is likewise a result of the characteristic modes of thinking of that same stage of development.

It is therefore inconceivable that knowledge (if it is to be of any 'use' - if it is to have a 'reasonable' status) should be conceived of as anything other than scientific.

As suggested, Rex has argued¹⁹ that the particular versions of sociology postulated owe a great deal to the particular experiences of the theorists concerned in relation to the political and economic changes of the country in which the theorist was located, and the orientations/interest/perspectives of the theorists antecedents.

In the case of Comte, this obviously involved some orientation to French Revolutionary experience, but also to the influence of people such as St Simon. Comte's underlying orientation was in fact to provide a more acceptable alternative to the programmes of idealists and revolutionaries. A new social order was to be envisaged through social science and therefore such a social science would have to display an acceptable degree of objectivity in order to be regarded as in some way establishing conceptual schemes outside the personable nature of man. Such a programme naturally conveyed the idea of a natural science built upon the discovery of facts and laws independent of man. It was therefore natural that social science should be conceived of as an albeit more complicated version of the model of natural science dominant in the day. Furthermore, Comte's conviction that the idea of a society achieving 'social solidarity' is tied to the notion of a collaboration of individuals through the division of labour (with state political and ideological control to ensure that integration is achieved) which necessitates an objective means of formulating experience in order to avoid the

(scientifically untenable) 'wild schemes',²⁰ of the idealists and revolutionaries. Comte's sociology then derives from the St Simon kind of view of the primacy of the scientist and of a State ruled by the 'useful' industrial classes.²¹

In contrast to this collective view of society Spencer's sociology was built upon a somewhat different conception of society stemming from the English liberal tradition. Spencer posited a society based upon freedom of contract influenced by the free trade kind of thinking of for instance Adam Smith, but in fact the kind of freedom of contract envisaged represented a freedom of trade between those who had the power to trade - the capitalist entrepreneur class, whilst the masses (with no alternative) had to enter into contract in name only dictated by the entrepreneurs with the power to withhold opportunity for contract. Nevertheless Spencer's conception of sociology was equally tied to a scientific base originating from his evolutionary conception of existence. A science of society thus becomes inevitable as an evolutionary progression, and necessary for establishing formal recognition of the superiority of, and the ability to attain and sustain, the counterbalancing social integration (the coherence) in the face of increasing evolutionary differentiation (the heterogeneity). Science was to be the means of ensuring that progress was indeed progress, alleviating some of the negative aspects of the evolutionary journey, the dissolution and disintegration of which, contrary to some of his more severe critics views, Spencer seems to have indeed been aware.²²

Thus the foundations of sociology are firmly located in a view of

sociology as science. Knowledge of society and man in society is a natural extension of scientific knowledge and knowledge about anything to be acceptable is naturally to be put on a scientific basis. That is the dominant view of the Age. With this kind of intellectual inheritance it is little wonder that a great deal of sociological work has been constructed upon versions of sociology as a science, generally constructed according to some (often presumed) model of natural science. However as conceptions of natural science have come to be seen as more problematic, controversy in sociology has also become more voluble. Unfortunately the arenas of debate have too often involved oversimplified versions of science in criticisms of some of the alleged perpetrations of unproblematic sociologies. Attacks upon for example positivist sociology have too often relied upon unproblematic versions of what constitutes being positivist, Comte's notion of a positive Philosophy is often regarded as a starting point for the construction of positivist sociology and Comte is often held responsible for a supposed wrong turning in sociological development, whereas in fact as illustrated, Comte was very much aware of the great difficulties set by his programme. If an awareness of difficulty is not much to boast about it is nevertheless a sobering thought that not much progress (at least in terms of a development of a comprehensive and generally accepted way to proceed) has been made on this problem even today.

Development of approaches to the problems as seen by Comte and Spencer, and particularly scientific development, can be traced in the work of Durkheim, although again, critics of his work have not always located his programme in relation to his aims, as developments of

Inter alia Durkheim was concerned with Spencer's idea of a transition from incoherent homogeneity (mechanical solidarity) to coherent heterogeneity (organic solidarity) and with the way in which to achieve a moral accomplishment of this social integration. The failure to achieve such an integration, requiring the commitment of individuals to supra-individual obligations, would result in anomie. Such obligations required an accepted 'moral authority'.

'For the feeling of obligation to appear in all its strength there must exist a closely wrought moral system prevailing without opposition.'²³

The acceptance of such a moral system was seen as a condition of man's liberation and the apparent problem of contradictions in the practical application of such a liberating obligation was defined out of existence by the very inevitability of such a, 'no freedom without order - no (sustainable) order without freedom' conceptualisation.

'By putting himself under the wing of society, he makes himself also, to a certain extent, dependent upon it. But this is a liberating dependence. There is no paradox here.'²⁴

The insistence in the notion that there lies no inherent contradiction in the idea of individual freedom being attainable by a subjugation of the individual to social control is underlain by Durkheim's notion of the concept of social facts, and the idea that there could be such

things as social facts, has been the target of many of Durkheim's critics.

The notion of a social fact being the heart of Durkheim's conception of sociology as a science therefore forms the basis of the differentiation of a subject matter separate from those of the other sciences. Social facts are conceived of as consisting of 'ways of acting, thinking and feeling which are external to the individual', and which 'endowed with a power of coercion', consequently control him.²⁵ The postulation of a dimension of social facts existing 'outside the individual consciousness' is then the contentious basis of Durkheim's sociology.

The ensuing suggestion that social statistics (for example concerning suicide) are a rich source of data for the sociologist has resulted in interpretations of Durkheim's work as supporting a sociology based on the collection of statistical data in order to test a hypothesis about the relationships of certain entities which are amenable to measurement. This has led to the view of Durkheim as a founding father of 'abstracted empiricism'.²⁶ There is much to refute in such a restricted view of the work of Durkheim, although of course the reliance upon social statistics as fact (in effect) in much of Durkheim's empirical work has been shown to be far too simplistic (for example by Douglas in respect of the individual/external fact dimensions of defining suicide.²⁷) The argument by Durkheim that the scientific programme of sociology involved the sociologist in eliminating all his common sense notions and preconceptions about the phenomena under study can be seen to rest on the same kind of objective

view of a natural science model identified in the discussion on Comte and Spencer. Considering the revolution in conceptions of natural science which have occurred, although by no means universally accepted in the last 70 years (eg. the Einsteinian notion that even the observation of once supposed objective entities such as space and time are subject to the observer's perspective) such an objective view does indeed seem strange (although Einstein himself was not averse to calling upon 'outside agency' for support when challenged to provide evidence). But that is with hindsight. For the purposes of the current argument it will be more fruitful to follow the ensuing tendency to form camps reflecting what Durkheim is supposed to have said, rather than carrying out an extensive further analysis of what one more person thinks he said. Thus those who would view Durkheim as supporting their version of establishing relationships between hypothesised structures would no doubt emphasise that Durkheim clearly called for this.

'We have seen that sociological explanation consists exclusively in establishing relations of causality, that is a matter of connecting a phenomenon to its cause, or rather a cause to its effects.'²⁸

They would in doing so however pay rather less attention to the call to comparative method.

'Consequently, one cannot explain a social fact of any complexity except by following its complete development through all social species.'²⁹

Alternatively those who would view Durkheim as postulating a peculiarly untenable version of a positivist sociology based on a

construction of an unholding causal explanation epitomised in Durkheim's rejection of J.S. Mill's idea of the plurality of causes (by positing that if there 'appeared' to be a plurality of causes then there was a plurality of 'things.'³⁰) would no doubt hold that Durkheim destroys his own aims.

'..... if suicide depends on more than one cause, it is because, in reality, there are several kinds of suicides.'³¹

The proposition that the treatment of phenomena as things was as Giddens³² has pointed out, a methodological principle not an ontological statement, would in this schema be given rather less attention than it deserves.

'..... All that it asks is that the principle of causality be applied to social phenomena. Again this principle is enunciated for sociology not as a rational necessity but only as an empirical postulate, produced by legitimate induction.'³³

Despite these fundamental problems and differences, it is clear that Durkheim's conception of sociology rests upon the identification of a distinctive area separate from other sciences and involving different kinds of facts from for instance biological facts.

'For it can justify its existence only when it has for its subject matter an order of facts which the other sciences do not study.'³⁴

The methodological inheritance resulting in much of what passes for

sociology being based upon unproblematic versions of science, has been influenced perhaps even more significantly from quite other directions than those of the founding fathers, despite the disproportionate burdens carried by figures such as those examined here. Such is the burden of intellectual pioneering. In the brief excursion undertaken it has been possible only to argue for the need for more substantial rescue operations to be carried out on such early and significant theorists, but it has been suggested that there are other perhaps more fundamental problems underlying such a task not least the problems of language which although traditionally regarded as posing significant semantic/syntactic problems, also constitute substantial historical/contextual problems demonstrated by the preponderance of subsequent versions of what was contextually meant. Translation is not just a question of translating the words. The idea of a sociology (as a science) being built upon a model of a natural science in which that model is itself more problematic than is often supposed, leads to an analysis of the kinds of natural science model underlying such constructions of sociology. Although there are numerous versions with more or less subtle variations, nevertheless there are recurring themes which typify the kinds of views of doing science which predominate amongst scientists of the kind which have influenced sociologists concerned to establish their subject as scientific upon similar bases to their 'spectacularly successful' natural science colleagues. Perhaps the precepts of this view of the world are best approached via the positivist conception represented by the 'Vienna Circle' of 'Logical Positivists'.

Briefly the logical positivism of this group of theorists sought to

establish the idea that knowledge could only be possible in the shape of formal statements which could be tested - anything else was nonsensical. Thus building upon Kant's idea that it was impossible to have knowledge of anything which could not be experienced by the senses, the Logical Positivists extended this into a formal scheme of things which had to be statable in terms of logic or mathematics and demolished any notion of the existence of anything beyond the ordinary world revealed to us by our common sense.³⁵ Without pursuing here the many philosophical problems raised by this schema, for the purposes of this discussion it will suffice to concentrate upon the extent to which the programme set, epitomised the approach of those who influenced the kinds of sociology under examination.

Ayer, often credited with the introduction of logical positivism to this country,³⁶ has in fact suggested that the tenets of the programme were largely false.

'Well, I suppose the most important of the defects was that nearly all of it was false.'

37

Ayer has, nevertheless identified that the appeal of logical positivism to scientists was that the idea of knowledge being dependant on the very thing scientists were doing (empirically testing) was enormously attractive and encouraging.

'After all, it told them they were the most important people, and they liked that.'

38

This justification of what scientists were doing was obviously a powerful force and the ideas represented in logical positivism are relevant not only to conceptualising the kinds of science carried out up to that time, but have been influential ever since despite being largely discredited. It is a very comfortable way to proceed, to be simply concerned with doing science with procedure largely unproblematic and settled. The predominance of such views of the way to proceed albeit often largely formally unexplicated, has undoubtedly extended much further than simply a layman's view of what scientists do!

Assumptions of formal logic underlying scientific work carried out today are moreover often held to be merely refinements of the kinds of assumptions predominant a century ago. The traditional scientific view of the world saw the central task of science as a search for natural laws (laws which were generalisable). The most obvious way to go about that task was to carry out observation of 'what there is' and induce general laws from these observations. This kind of tradition stretches back through the centuries to Newton, perhaps first being systematically described by Bacon.³⁹ From a great number of observations a theory is supposed to follow from the facts by a process of rigorous argument.

There are a great many problems inherent in this conception of formulating scientific knowledge, the most fundamental of which being that no series of observations can be complete enough to justify the establishment of a general law, since it can never be made definite that one more observation would not produce counter evidence to the induced theory which has been constructed to represent the general

pattern of things. This argument is most famously illustrated in Poppers example of the ubiquity of swans. Popper argued that no finite number of observations could be said to conclusively establish the universal statement that 'all swans are white' since there may be somewhere a black swan which no-one has ever (yet) seen.⁴⁰

Poppers scientific method developed from this criticism therefore concentrated upon the possibility of such a black swan and argued that such a possibility must form the basis of constructing the kinds of knowledge which are permissible. Popper suggested that the way to proceed was presented by just such limitations. The only way was to proceed to attempt to falsify statements such as 'all swans are white,' since the observing of one black swan was sufficient to disprove the statement. Science should therefore proceed to establish knowledge on the basis of falsification.

The falsification response to the problems of induction has influenced a tradition of carrying out research in science known as the 'hypothetico-deductive' method in which hypotheses are put forward and deductions made about what should happen if the hypothesis is correct. Tests are carried out supposedly to refute the hypothesis. In actual practice however such testing so often degenerates into confirmatory testing, and refutations are reserved for someone elses hypotheses! The whole idea of proceeding by falsification is indeed in many ways counter culture (or at least counter to what we feel our culture ought to be).

Far from being a refinement of traditional assumptions of (inductive)

science the development of a deductive method is a complete reversal. Further, the movement from a scheme of induction which embarrassingly for the history of science can be shown to have such a dubious logical foundation, to a scheme in which knowledge is supposed to be accumulated by falsification has profound implications for the notion of truth. It is no longer possible to equate science with truth since we have no means of knowing (independently) what the truth is - we can only make (hopefully?) ever closer approximations to the truth. Furthermore the falsification process results in a host of theories being superseded (or it ought) but we do not always discard such things as no longer being a part of science. So the theories of Newton and of Einstein are regarded as being a part of science yet they cannot both be true and may indeed both be false.

Such epistemological bases for the discontinuity between truth and the way to proceed in science has left high and dry so many studies aspiring to be science. This is particularly apparent in sociological studies which purport to follow (inevitably unproblematic) versions of natural science. In fact most attempts at formulating what science is, adopt a schema which tends to concentrate upon the pathbreaking revolutionary part of scientific activity, whereas most of the scientific community are for most of the time engaged in more mundane activities. The majority of those working on science are not continually trying to disprove something which (by falsification or discovery) would 'turn the world on its head.' Most are getting on with the job of doing science irrespective of what are (defensively?) defined as philosophical problems and not the concern of scientists. Kuhn has termed this kind of every-day activity, 'normal science,' and argued

that most science is conducted under the banner of the 'dominant paradigm' of the age.⁴¹ This relativist theory of Kuhn's suggests that any real progress in acquiring scientific knowledge can then only take place in periodic revolutions in which the accepted theoretical framework (of a particular community) is overturned. The question of whether or not such activities can realistically be addressed in terms of constituting a community, raises the problem of reification. The resolution of this problem obviously depends upon how the characteristics of what is to be defined as a community relate to the distinguishing facets of doing science. Mulkey for instance has suggested that rather than viewing a community as being constituted in the incidence of technical norms or social norms, the very epistemological negotiations in culture (e.g. professional journals as a constitutive arena) represent community manifestations.⁴² It does not require an extensive content analysis of such journals, however, to argue that Kuhn's idea of doing normal science can be easily accommodated into this scheme - such epistemological negotiations predominantly constituting reinforcements as distinct from revolutions.

The idea of a scientific community busily going about the largely unproblematic job of doing science, is built upon the idea of science being in some way a superior form of acquiring knowledge, by establishing more objective observations and formulations, whilst in reality perhaps being more akin to, formulating the formulatable within the taken for granted and accepted ways of proceeding. This is not of course to disqualify results of such activities - indeed it would be fatuous to disclaim the advances and 'usefulness' of, for instance,

medical science although the blinkering which may have been so produced is contentious to say the least. The conception of a science of society based upon such practice, is however, more particularly dubious in view of the nature of the subject, as a concern with the very subjectivity which is misleadingly conceived in so much of the work done under the model which such formulations are seeking to emulate. The unproblematic formulation of a distinction between objectivity and subjectivity will not do. And it particularly will not do for sociology.

The consideration of sociology as science undertaken in this section has been concerned to trace the antecedents of some of the more unproblematic approaches to sociology, but there are other approaches to constructing a sociology some at least of which are more realistic with respect to such problems. Such alternatives cannot be considered as not-science, rather they often involve different conceptions of science and what a science of society ought to be. Some of these will be taken up in the following chapter, in the meantime however the focus moves from science to theory.

Theory in Sociology.

There are many versions of what constitutes a theory. In the previous section for example, an examination was made of traditions which consider that a scientific theory consists of general universal statements whose truth can be determined by method. However, the argument was developed that this kind of conception is only really sustainable because conceptions of science underlying such formulations are treated as unproblematic, and as representing the

objectification of a separate external and knowable world, a world in which scientific theories are determined by facts.⁴³ In this section some of the problems of such inherent assumptions will be made more apparent.

Marx's concept of a theory for instance (at least in the later writings) consisted of explicating the apparent observable features of social life in terms of underlying structure.⁴⁴ Of course there is no such thing as one reading of Marx, and the conception of what he meant by theory is not the least of these interpretive problems. Nevertheless it is possible to identify a theme in which theory is the practical accomplishment of science.

'The dispute whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question.'⁴⁵

This is tied closely to Marx's conception of praxis which is seen as the only end for criticism of abstractions of speculative philosophy (of law - and of the state, from individual man) by attaining revolution.⁴⁶ The transcending of such abstractions is the task in fact of Marx's conception of science by reasoning into concreteness.

'..... by the latter (the scientifically correct method) the abstract definitions lead to the reproduction of the concrete subject in the course of reasoning.'⁴⁷

The task of science is to establish by argument.

'Science consists precisely in demonstrating how'⁴⁸

Further the task is one of establishing the nature of theory as being inevitably tied to practice not something existing only in the realms of thought.

'The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking that is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question.'⁴⁹

Thus being scientific seems to be equated in some way with, being rigorous.

Despite then, the problem of making a reading of Marx (indeed some commentators have held that Marx has been sociologised, arguing that Marx neither was, nor intended to be a sociologist⁵⁰) Marx as theorist has been so influential that it would be unprofitable as well as fatuous to ignore him.

The search for causal relationships which could provide an explanation for observable features of social life in this framework then, is the programme which rather than an experimental search for general universal laws, involves a comparative procedure by description (analysis) of different modes of production co-present within a given society, and different societies in which different modes predominate.⁵¹

Some of the most influential writings to develop from a Marxist perspective are those of the Frankfurt school,⁵² in which the development of social theory as a critical theory, is put forward essentially as a theory of action inseparably located in a transformation of society (involving the control of the means of production by those involved in producing.⁵³)

Connerton has described the theoretical perspective of writers of the Frankfurt School as involving an attempt to steer between two extreme positions which typifies the relationship between philosophy and the social sciences.⁵⁴ He argues that Frankfurt School writers sought to 'fertilize interpenetration of theoretical and empirical work.'⁵⁵ 'Ignoring the seeming disjunction between philosophical speculation and empiricism,' a programme of critical theory was to be constructed.⁵⁶

The tenets of such a theory were to involve a much more complex approach to the problem of objectively erecting an explanatory schema which represented social life. The drift in fact, was to move away from a simple naturalistic observable world view to a deeper consideration of subjective factors, involving a concern with interpretive understanding (*verstehen*) as distinct from causal explanation (*erklaren*).

Keat and Urry have noted some of the most important features of such a critical theory.

'First, it starts from an evaluation of existing reality as fundamentally irrational. Second, it attempts to identify the possibilities for change in that reality, the relations and developments that are already operating to undermine the continuation of its present form. Third, critical theory challenges the ideological, reified consciousness which is generated by existing social reality, and which systematically conceals these potentialities for radical transformation. Finally, it is opposed to positivism, and to the positivistic assumptions of most types of social science.'⁵⁷

Such a programme exemplifies a shift from positivist to phenomenological conceptions of formulating knowledge about social life, but clearly this is not to say (absolutely) that one is science and the other is not - although this has sometimes been done. The implications of such a phenomenological approach will be returned to in the following chapter, but more immediately the idea of Marx of describing (analysing) the structure of society by attending to a comparison of the different modes of production prevalent in a particular society, rather than suggesting that such features are separately identifiable in a positivistic manner, can be seen to comprise an abstraction process carried out for analytical convenience. Such abstraction however is not an abstraction of speculation, but rather an abstraction of purpose. Such an analytical device suggests the notion of an ideal type and indeed Weber developed just such a concept as a means of formulating knowledge of social life.

The ideal type concept as developed by Weber was to serve as a guidance in research. It was not to be considered a reality but a device to be used to give unambiguous means of expression to a description of reality.⁵⁸

The ideal type, as a means, forms part of what Weber called the rational method,⁵⁹ which was the determining factor, establishing that sociology was a science. Sociologists thus had a shared element with other scientists - a rational method. Such a rational method represented a major agent in the demystification of the world,⁶⁰ and the formulation of sociology as science was seen to be essentially concerned with explanations which are necessarily limited in scope and incomplete in execution.⁶¹ The interpretation of the sociologist

was thus seen as a rational process based upon rules of logic and valid method,⁶² such a version of science involving a theory in which concept construction is to be grounded in (and depends upon) the setting of the problem.⁶³ This also necessitated an essentially critical programme.

'The greatest advances in the sphere of the social sciences are substantively tied up with the shift in practical cultural problems and take the guise of a critique of concept construction.'⁶⁴

The emphasis placed upon the distinction between the natural sciences and the cultural sciences by Weber⁶⁵ has been criticised by Parsons,⁶⁶ who argued that the natural sciences are more relativistic than Weber seemed to allow. However as Eldridge has pointed out⁶⁷ the adoption of Parsons' argument that there is no logical difference whatsoever, is to ground social science in a law producing totality. In fact Parsons seems to see the ideal typical form as preventing the formulating of such laws,⁶⁸ and therefore limited to ideal typical sociological generalisations, which cannot develop social theory in the sense of 'setting up a system of interdependent variables.'⁶⁹ For Weber however the 'construction of a reality which could be permanently and universally valid'⁷⁰ was anathema since he did not feel that cultural scientists could have direct awareness of the structure of human actions in all their reality. For Weber, sociology was to be a science which was concerned with interpretive understanding of social action - action in this context being defined as:

'..... all human behaviour when and insofar as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to it.....Action is social insofar as by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual or individuals it takes account of the behaviour of others and is thereby oriented in its course.'⁷¹

Meaning however in this schema does not refer to an objectively correct meaning or use which is true in some metaphysical sense.⁷²

The subsequent readings and misreadings of Weber have been multifarious and whole articles have been written on single concepts,⁷³ in attempts to rescue the original intent. For the purposes of this discussion it is sufficiently evident that Weber considered that sociology was a science, albeit a substantially different kind of science from some of those categorised previously.

Parsons himself has undoubtedly been one of the most prolific theorists in sociology, but again his work is the subject of great controversy. Parsons' work is in fact largely motivated by an attempt to construct a 'Grand Theory',⁷⁴ which would be general and establish universal laws. Unfortunately in attempting to create such a Universal Theory the high level of abstraction generated has resulted in formidable obscurity. Although obscurity is not new in academic writings and such ascents of Everest are forgivable if the view from the top is worthwhile (revealing etc.) unfortunately the very aim of Parsons is so debatable, as to make the journey questionable.

In his construction of general theory with universal laws Parsons in fact distinguishes a theoretical system from an empirical system.

'.....(Theory) is confined to the formulation and logical relations of propositions containing empirical facts in direct relation to the observations of the facts and thus empirical verification of the propositions.'

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Each theoretical term therefore has to be related to empirical facts to be applicable (and given meaning). Theory is thus seen as a 'means of defining various properties of empirical variables and stating relationships between their values.'

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Gouldner's analysis of the consequences of a Parsonian position has argued inter alia that all theory subsumes an underlying value position.

'From this perspective all social theory is immersed in a sub-theoretical level of domain assumptions and sentiments which both liberate and constrain it.'

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Thus the domain assumptions of Parsons can be seen to be based in a consensus view and any apparent conflicts are accommodated into an already formulated theory of relationships in an established structure. (Alternatively of course Marxist conceptions of theory could be seen to be grounded in a view which emphasises the basic conflict between classes, with a similar accommodation process taking place in which any element of consensus is defined for example as ideologically manipulated legitimation of structures of domination).

With such an individualistic model in which theory is a representation of certain individual's views of the world one would expect to see shifts in emphasis and theoretical perspectives from time to time

attributable to particular influences as individuals developed, and indeed Gouldner argues that Parsons himself made just such a shift.

'It is as if in his theory of equilibrium Parsons speaks as a Comtian but when he addresses himself to a theory of change, he is suddenly transported and mysteriously finds himself speaking with Marx's voice.'

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Gouldner's argument however places too great an emphasis on the leading figures (Parsons, Marx, etc.) whereas as discussed in the considerations of sociology as science, the greater masses of people doing sociology are likely to be much more variable and hence dominant domain assumptions are more diverse. Nevertheless the postulation does highlight the fallacy of concrete bases for constructing conceptions of what constitutes theory just as was illustrated with science. To a large extent theory is dependent upon the underlying conceptions of what theory is (as self evident from dominant domain assumptions) and this often results in spurious notions of what theory should be due to such limitations in perceptions of what theory could be. The result is often then a multitude of studies of dubious basis/utility (Grand Theory abstractions or abstracted empiricisms) rather than a variety of studies of what those various individuals feel really matters. This obviously has profound consequences for the theory of knowledge, since knowledge comes to be defined as superior if scientific or theoretical, but the very notions of scientific and theoretical are built upon shifting domain assumptions. A sociology of what is possible (as perceived) is therefore constructed, rather than a sociology of what is necessary (to be approached through

the explication of the problematics of constructing such a sociology.)

Not all sociology of course is guilty of this methodological opportunism. Merton has argued for instance that there is a divergence producing almost two sociologies, one in which sociologists are faced with not knowing whether what they say is true, and one in which sociologists say that what they say is demonstrably true, but that they cannot indicate its significance.⁷⁹ There have indeed been several calls to a more significant sociology⁸⁰ but the difficulties of formulating such a more significant sociology often produce paralysis. The difficulties are not least located in the subjective/objective dichotomy, resulting for instance in positivist/interpretive distinctions in conceptions of the task of a science of society. This dichotomy will be returned to in the following chapter, but in the next Section some of the attempts to delineate conceptions of sociology as science by comparing with art are examined.

Sociology as Not-Art

The counterposing of science and art is of course a traditional differential equation, and inevitably the supposed dichotomy has been used to attempt to illuminate conceptions of sociology. This is not to suggest that sociology has been dressed to appear as an opposite to art, on the contrary sometimes quite subtly, the similarities have been emphasised, although always retaining something of the idea of being more rigorous (doing art scientifically!). One way of achieving this has been to suggest that artists and especially literary artists are not so different from scientists and certainly from sociologists, in terms of what they are trying to do, but the way that they go about doing it is different. Of course art is just

as problematic, if not more so, as is science, and therefore subject to the same kinds of problems of identity as examined in the preceding discussion of science. I shall not in consequence rehearse a similar debate in relation to art, and at least for simplicity I shall contain the discussion in the main to considerations of literary art and particularly to work produced by novelists.

One difference often pointed to between sociologists and novelists highlights that the sociologist is involved in demystifying the world whereas the novelist is often involved in mystifying the world and therefore the enterprise must be different. The problem with such a distinction however rests in the relationship to knowledge and the equating of demystification with acquiring knowledge, whereas the results in terms of knowledge-in-consequence (in that readers internalise and use insights and ideas of both) rather than in terms of supposed rigorously formulated knowledge (scientific/theoretical?) suggest that such apparent distinctions may not in fact be so divergent.

As Berger argues.

'If the achievements of both are compared, the gap considerably narrows. The promise of social science is based on a faith in its future that is no more justified, scientifically, than is the opposed notion that social science can never be a rigorous set of interrelated propositions, laws and theories explaining observed, acknowledged facts about human behaviour and social institutions.'

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The idea of social science resting on a faith in its future (we have enormous difficulties - but we're working on them!) considerably deflates the traditional image of the artist as being passionate

(affectively intellectual) and the scientist as being dispassionate (rigorously intellectual).⁸² Further, if the differences in enterprise (eg. to produce knowledge as distinct from, to entertain etc.) are established only on a faith, then the implications for knowledge are indeed some way from normative expectations.

Again, the argument raises the question of truth in relation to validity of knowledge and although this problem will be examined in greater detail in the next chapter, suffice it to say that as a result of the demolition of traditional categories of activities such as delineated as doing science and doing art, even some of those involved in science would now refute the idea that science is exclusively concerned with establishing truth.

Stinchcombe for instance has argued that truth should be relegated to secondary importance in favour of utility.

'The crucial question to ask of a strategy is not whether it is true, but whether it is sometimes useful. I have a firm conviction that some things are to be explained in one way, some another. Trying to explain a phenomenon by a strategy inappropriate to the empirical terrain, because one thinks that a strategy is a "theory" which must be either true or false, leads into ambushes.....Which kind is true of a particular phenomenon is a matter for investigation, not for debate among "theorists".'⁸³

Such subjugation of truth to utility can however, so easily lapse into a kind of methodological insurance policy occasioned by virtue of utilitarian aims rather than any genuine attempt to epistemologically explicate the nature of the particular problem. It is not simply

a question of the kind of strategy which is true for a particular phenomenon being a matter for investigation as Stinchcombe suggests, but that the very essence of the problematic nature of epistemology involves the question of whether it is possible to isolate method from content - ie whether or not such a separation would represent a 'category mistake'.⁸⁴ If such is indeed the case, then what is to be the subject of investigation? How is knowledge to be formulated? Rex has suggested that this problem is the main problem facing sociology - finding a way of such formulation.

'The main problem facing the sociologist is that of finding a scientific and objective way of talking about these things'.⁸⁵

The artist however is also concerned with the means of formulating - of communicating - but truth is not generally even a secondary issue in such formulations. There is nevertheless still a concern with what may be called authenticity. The characters and events in a novel may be fictitious but the message has to link in some way with the reader's reality (in terms of constructs - even in the case of fantasy - interpreted by the reader) to retain authenticity (witness the 'problems' with *Finnegan's Wake*). Moreover many nineteenth century novelists were concerned to be didactic by formal authorial intrusion and with such aims it is not difficult to see how an alternative schema in which art (in this case literature) is conceived as producing knowledge (albeit a different kind of knowledge to scientific knowledge) has developed.

A division into art providing insights, and science providing logical

deductions which somehow suggests that science produces more secure knowledge is in effect perpetuated by Brown in his argument for a framework of cognitive aesthetics⁸⁶ with which sociology could proceed, the aims being one of achieving a confluence of the different kinds of knowledge.

'Cognitive aesthetics we argue, has four principal advantages. First, it permits us to move beyond copy theories of truth in both art and in science. Second, it provides a framework within which the pioneering artist and the pioneering scientist are both seen as involved in essentially the same activity: making paradigms through which experience becomes intelligible. These two advantages give birth to a third and fourth; for if art and science are seen to have an essential affinity, then the possibility is opened for a fusion of the two principal ideas of sociological knowledge: the scientific or positivist one, stressing logical deductions and controlled research, and the artistic or intuitive one, stressing insights and subjective understanding. Finally, insofar as such a fusion is possible, cognitive aesthetics provides a source of metacategories for assessing sociological theory from any methodological perspective.'⁸⁷

Unfortunately such a programme makes the same kind of category mistake already identified, being more concerned with method than with results to the extent that it starts from the assumption that the knowledge (as end) produced by art is essentially different in essence to that produced by science quite irrespective of methods (as means). The essential aim seems to be one of rigour which in some way will lead to the formulation of a confluence of different kinds of knowledge and a transcendence of the whole objective/subjective problem in social science.

In fact Brown's cognitive aesthetics in maintaining the category mistake does less for the transcendence of this problem, than does for instance the (literary?) work of Pirsig,⁸⁸ in 'Zen and the Art of Motor Cycle Maintenance,' postulating quality (in the 'form of life' - a concept to be examined in the following chapter) as holding the clue to the bridge between human subjectivity and objectivity. The separation of such science and art thus seems to rest upon a proposition that would conceive the work of Brown as being more rigorous than that of Pirsig - a somewhat tenuous condition.

Just as the idea that science is exclusively concerned with truth is no longer upheld even by many scientists, so also however the traditional separation of science and art has not been regarded as sustainable in all quarters. The failure of science to withstand the supposed objectivity ideals had indeed led many philosophers of science to reject the separation. Kuhn for instance had indicated that much of his work stemmed from a realisation that such a split was untenable.

'I remember well my own discovery of the close and persistant parallels between the two enterprises I had been taught to regard as polar.'⁸⁹

Putnam in arguing for an objectivity to moral (ethical) principles suggests that the connection with what it feels like to live by such principles is paramount and that literature has an important part to play in developing understanding of the human situation.

'We can only understand the way in which the literary imagination does really help us to understand ourselves and life, on the one hand, and the way in which science does really bear on metaphysical problems on the other, if we have an adequate view of moral reasoning, where, by moral reasoning, I mean not just reasoning about duty or virtue, but moral reasoning in the widest sense - reasoning about how to live.'⁹⁰

It is clear that literary effort has been expended at least as much as sociological effort, towards 'reasoning about how to live,' and that does underline the problems of the status of sociology with respect to knowledge and understanding the human situation. The problems of how to proceed in determining the validity and status of knowledge in sociology and the basic issue of how questions of this nature are to be settled, have been further compounded by academic discipline demarcations.

Sociology as Not-Philosophy.

The problem of the way to proceed in sociology then is clearly not at all settled, and yet a great deal of social enquiry is undertaken as though it had been largely settled. The construction of a sociology-as-method rests upon a foundation of sociology as empirical and to the extent that epistemological questions are not entirely ignored they are defined as problems for the philosophy of science. The traditional split between philosophy and science has perpetuated this schism.

Berlin⁹¹ has argued that advance in the sciences and philosophy has been a process of allocation, whereby empirical and formal elements are disentangled producing separate disciplines with substantive subject headings, but always leaving a nucleus of unresolved,

unanalysed and apparently insoluble questions whose status is attributed to philosophy.

'Indeed it might almost be said that the history of philosophy in its relation to the sciences, consists, in part, in the disentangling of those questions which are either empirical (and inductive), or formal (and deductive), from the mass of problems which fill the minds of men, and the sorting out of these under the heads of the empirical or formal sciences concerned with them.'⁹²

In this way argued Berlin, astronomy, mathematics, psychology, biology, etc. became divorced from the general body of philosophy.

'They remained within the province of philosophy only so long as the kinds of way in which their problems were to be settled remained unclear, and so were liable to be confused with other problems with which they had relatively little in common, and from which their differences had not been sufficiently discerned.'⁹³

To what extent then, has sociology disentangled its problems? To what extent have the kinds of ways in which its problems are to be settled, been clarified? Clearly this can be said to concern the history of sociology, in the same way in which Berlin's argument considers that the disentangling problem encapsulates the history of philosophy.

On the one hand, the identifying of sociology's problems as to be settled by empirical testing of hypotheses would seem to be such a clarification. Indeed as already suggested, Spencer argued that a method concerned with comparisons constituted such an empirical

foundation (... 'in rude outline an empirical sociology ...'⁹⁴) and used this argument to refute the assertion that sociology was not possible by suggesting that the assertion was based upon a misconception and that sociology could be considered to be concerned with the evolution of structure and function in society in the way in which biological science is concerned with structure and function in the body.

The claim that such a programme of empirical testing might be a clarification of the question of the kinds of ways in which the problems of sociology are to be settled is, however, tempered by the fact that one hundred years after Spencer's proposal, the programme is still the subject of contentious debate. The same kinds of assertion as that to which Spencer responded are still being expressed. Louch, for instance, is quite clear on this.

'My main intent has been to show that the idea of a science of man or society is untenable.'⁹⁵

That such a proposition can still be put and taken seriously is perhaps evidence enough to doubt the degree of clarification achieved, but the kinds of refutation now made, by shifting the ground upon which the battle is to be fought, make this doubt even more concrete.

Gellner in dismissing Louch's assertion, has argued⁹⁶ that far from the pursuit of generality being a mistaken course resulting from an attempt to move away from an ad hoc kind of explanatory existence, the emergence of generalising/scientific thought is not simply a historical element of the social sciences, but is a crucial phenomenon for the social sciences. The difference between Spencer's and Gellner's

refutations of the assertion, that sociology is not possible is interesting, since whereas Spencer suggests a method (with all its inherent difficulties) to overcome the problems of doubt seeded in the assertion, Gellner's approach suggests that the issue is not one of providing a method to overcome an obstacle, but rather that the obstacle is itself the vehicle of procedure. The question of whether or not sociology is possible is not a question which can be addressed without concurrent consideration of how sociology is constituted. Gellner considers in fact that the emergence of generalising/scientific thought is not simply a precondition of sociology, it is its subject matter, and is inevitable, in that it is a feature of advancing societies precisely because it is that very advance which inexorably comes to be regarded/defined as an advance.

In Berlin's schema, unresolved, unanalysed and apparently insoluble questions were attributed to philosophy, and since the foregoing discussion has suggested that sociology has fundamental unresolved problems the nature of which make them apparently insoluble, the issue of whether sociology is a science would seem to be questionable on philosophical grounds, much more fundamental than considerations of for instance, sociology as a science v. an art. There is also another perspective to this problem of the location of subject matter.

Berlin⁹⁷ has suggested that in addition to complex and apparently insoluble problems a somewhat different perspective would see philosophy as being concerned with the naive (such as the kind of questions which children ask, because they do not know the enormity of what they are asking). From this perspective it is possible to view the question,

'what is sociology?' as such a naive question, and the fact that it causes so much difficulty emphasises the enormity of the question. In fact the question, 'what is sociology?' is not simply a primordial question subsuming all the epistemological and methodological questions discussed in this chapter because, 'what is sociology?' is not a question which can be disentangled and placed logically before the question, 'Is sociology possible?'. Thus the fact that the, 'what is?' question cannot ontologically be placed before the, 'Is it possible?' question, reinforces the argument that the disentanglement has not been accomplished to any great extent. Some philosophers, nonetheless, would argue that the question is a descriptive category question and that it is precisely because sociology has been disentangled that a question such as, 'what is sociology?', can be asked at all.

This controversy highlights a political element in the philosophers conceptual hierarchy which places philosophy above science (an extremely subtle resultant reversal of Locke's idea of the philosopher as 'under-labourer' - ie. clearing away the rubbish) in the process of disentangling the empirical (and the formal) to leave philosophy. This raises the question of the whole model being perhaps more of a comfortable, self-sustaining device used to create and justify the eminence and exclusiveness of the world of philosophers. The way in which a distinction is made between philosophy qua philosophy and philosophy qua philosophy of (e.g. philosophy of science - in which scientists may become involved) confirms this philosopher's hierarchy, and the distinction is perpetuated not least by the long tradition in science which emphasizes the need for such a separation. Bernard in fact, went even further than that:

'When a man of science takes a philosophical system as his base in pursuing a scientific investigation, he goes astray in regions that are too far from reality.'⁹⁸

To pose such an argument is clearly to suggest that scientists should not even involve themselves in a philosophy of It is then a short step to the view that the distinction is necessary because of the lack of competence of those involved with empirical matters to cope with the problems of philosophy. Indeed as Law⁹⁹ has suggested, many sociologists accept the subordinate position permitted them in the philosopher's scheme of intellectual activities, and keep their noses out of epistemological issues, thereby fostering the doctrine of epistemological incompetence. It is not therefore so surprising that the submerged world constituted in the symbol-rich nature of organisational life has been neglected, with all its potential hazards for 'knowledge.'

This chapter has examined some of the approaches to, and programmes put forward for, carrying out social analysis. It has been suggested that sociology originated in nineteenth century conceptions of a science of society to form the culmination of a developing scientific model of the world. It has been argued that a scientific conception has been maintained throughout the history of sociology, but that such scientific versions (some 'interpretive sociologies' discussed in the following chapter notwithstanding) have developed in peculiarly unproblematic programmes often unrecognisable in relation to the founding fathers' versions from which they have descended (eg. Comte's 'vicious circle' being presumed no longer vicious). In contrast, some of the arguments for the place of theory in sociology have been traced,

from more purposive theoretical programmes to ambitious general theory propoundings. It has been suggested that attempts to produce general theory have resulted in similar irrelevant abstractions to the abstracted empiricism resulting from unproblematic conceptions of sociology conceived as science. Further it has been argued that conceptions of sociology as science or theory which seek to establish or act on assumptions that such programmes are more rigorous and consequently produce more secure knowledge than can be produced by art are at best over-simplifications if not epistemologically untenable.

Finally it has been argued that traditional separations of sociology and philosophy have contributed to the view that the epistemological problems of carrying out social analysis have been largely solved whereas in reality not much disentanglement in the shape of clarification of the kinds of ways in which problems in sociology are to be settled, has been achieved.

The ground has now been prepared for a more extensive examination of the problems of knowledge in carrying out social enquiry, and in the following chapter the issues are located more firmly in the theory of knowledge. The discussion is then developed specifically into an investigation of the implications for procedure in social analysis, such as is undertaken in this thesis in relation to conceiving some of the submerged aspects of organisational life as symbolic manifestations of power.

PROBLEMS OF KNOWLEDGE AND PROCEDURE IN SOCIAL ENQUIRY

The theories of knowledge which have been promulgated in the philosophical vacuum created by the separation of science from philosophy have requisitely been 'handed down' from the philosopher's Mount Sinai, and to a large extent accepted and incorporated as bases for much of the empirical work carried out. It will be pertinent therefore to summarise the main positions developed in the theory of knowledge. This will be undertaken in the first section of this Chapter in preparation for a discussion of some of the alternative conceptions of social analysis in sections two and three, which in turn prepares the way for a development of an approach to procedure relevant to this particular enquiry, in section four.

The Problem of Knowledge

One of the traditional distinctions made in distinguishing different kinds of knowledge, has been between knowing-how and knowing-that. Hamlyn has suggested that knowledge-how might be said to be practical and knowledge-that to be theoretical,¹ but Ryle has argued that not all knowledge-how presupposes knowledge-that². The implication of this is to suggest that theoretical knowledge is not a necessary basis for practical knowledge. Such a distinction does not provide much clarification since it introduces an even more contentious notion involving the relationship between theoretical and practical.

A further typology has distinguished three different kinds of

knowledge involving, knowing-of in addition to knowing-how and knowing-that. In this schema a distinction is made between knowledge involving, competence, acquaintance, and apprehension/comprehension.³ Thus one may know how to play the piano (involving competence), one may know one's neighbour (involving acquaintance), and one may know that $2 + 2 = 4$ (involving apprehension/comprehension).

Notwithstanding Ryle's contention that one type of knowledge does not necessarily presuppose another type, it is arguable whether any type can exist in isolation, in that different types may act in parallel if not in linear dependency. The different types identified may in other words be implied in each other in the thrust of meaning. For example, to be competent at playing the piano (to know how to) also has an element of being acquainted (to be familiar with a piano as something to be played) and an element of apprehension/comprehension (to know that this will happen if.....). Indeed the overlapping is so multi-directional as to seriously question the whole typology. For the present purposes the typology will however be considered in the sense of representing an initial categorisation for analytical purposes and the type knowledge-that will be the main consideration, although without attempting to make the same kind of distinction between theoretical and practical as suggested by Hamlyn.

One problem confronting the knowledge-that conception is the condition of truth. How do we justify our knowledge-that (knowledge-how can easily be demonstrated by playing the musical instrument, knowledge-of by demonstrating our familiarity). We can conceive of some knowledge as if it were stored, but knowledge-that cannot always (or even very often) be demonstrated. Taking the example of the

formal mathematical statement $2 + 2 = 4$, such knowledge is only demonstrated by the same principles as knowing-how and knowing-of, with some kind of acceptance of past experience as validating present performance. A statement such as $2 + 2 = 4$ relies upon past assimilation of the rules of mathematics, similar to rules governing what is to count as playing a piano (ie. 'Yes that is demonstrably - in my experience - playing the piano') or count as knowing a neighbour (ie. 'Yes he demonstrably knows that fellow - he is familiar with so much about him.') Such a statement is nevertheless fundamentally different in origin (ie. in the extent of derivation from sense data) in that it cannot be accounted for by knowledge of empirical generalisation.⁴ Knowledge about playing the piano can be reinforced by empirical data since all observation of playing is likely to produce slightly different sensual experience (examples) which add something to the definition (as rule) of playing the piano. Similarly knowledge about ones neighbour. No amount of replication of $2 + 2 = 4$ can however, add anything different to (but can merely repeat) an already accepted principle. So much for knowledge of formal mathematical knowledge, but how far is this identified discontinuity in knowledge-that, exclusive to formal statements, or how far does it transcend into the supposedly empirical? How far is it possible to distinguish between knowledge derived from experience and universal (a priori) knowledge, and how far does such a distinction necessitate differing conceptions of truth.⁵

Traditionally this discontinuity has been held to establish a distinction between empirically derived knowledge (eg. science) and formal knowledge (eg. mathematics) resting on the assumption that a

priori principles relate to abstract entities and sensual experience derived principles relate to concrete (empirical) entities, more or less exclusively.

An illustration of the problem which is masked by this kind of conception can be drawn from an examination of the treatment of language.

Wittgenstein held that knowledge about language was obtainable by empirical method, with emphasis on the particular case. Such empirical method was not necessarily located in science, and indeed in many ways bears more relation to art, because the study of such particular cases was to be presented by careful descriptions of actual linguistic practices, rather than by being 'caught' in any theory.⁶

One of the main problems with this kind of formulation is said to be that it inevitably involves some kind of relativist position, and indeed the formulation has been attacked most notably by Gellner,⁷ but there is a perhaps even more fundamental ontological problem located in the necessity to use language to investigate language.

Such difficulty is located in the essentially human essence of what it is to use language. Chomsky has highlighted the foundations of this dilemma in his argument that because all the elements of language are too complicated for a child to learn empirically, there must be some pre-programming (ie. ontological ordering - quite distinct from ideas of disproportionate inheriting) in the make-up of the human capacity to acquire language.⁸ If this is so, then in the

Wittgensteinian investigative model, we are faced with empirically demonstrating facets of a phenomenon by the use of that same

phenomenon which is itself in part governed by a priori principles - a not inconsiderable methodological problem. Furthermore, if there is indeed some pre-programming in the human capacity to acquire language, it raises serious questions concerning the human conditions for knowledge acquisition.

Russell for instance argued that scientific inference necessitated a kind of knowing which had to be independent of experience.

'Either, therefore, we know something independently of experience, or science is moonshine.'⁹

This pre-empirical knowledge is such, in Russell's schema, that experience will confirm at least all the verifiable consequences.

What constitutes an unverifiable consequence and how the differentiation is made, is less clear. The more recent work of Quine leaves a similar problem by postulating the distinctly 'abstract character' of the 'innate structure' which underlies induction.¹⁰ For the purpose of this thesis I shall consider the idea of a priori elements, conceived as an innate ability to acquire knowledge, as constituting fundamental problems for any formulation of purely empirical basis to the criteria for knowledge. The effect of this on knowledge about power in organisations is to pose serious questions for any attempt to produce sovereign empirical hypothetico-deductive knowledge, and to rescue the submerged world from an exclusion at least on grounds of untestability or immeasurability.

In terms of the long-standing philosophical debate between rationalists and empiricists it is significant that apparent failures

of empiricism (eg. Popper's argument that we can never prove that 'all swans are white,' because there is always the possibility of someone discovering a black swan) can only be defined as failure on some scale of absolute knowledge more akin to rationalism (a rationalism located in the insistence that knowledge is obtainable by non-empirical means, traditionally epitomised by formal statements such as $2 + 2 = 4$, ie. for all time). In fact if no-one has yet discovered a black swan (say) then in terms of pure empirical knowledge, all swans are indeed white, (knowledge-in-consequence).

Such a consequential knowledge is however, quite separate to the possibility of an intuitive knowledge the conditions for which may be conceived as additional to knowledge from experience. The innate a priori elements which give rise to knowledge-in-consequence rather, are the basis of the possibility of knowledge from experience. Thus an intuitive knowledge that all swans are white is quite different to the priori elements which make it possible for experience of swan colour to be formulated into knowledge-in-consequence, that all swans are white, (although distinguishing between the two forms is problematic).

Theories of power in organisations which assume purely empirical foundations are therefore built upon shifting sands, since the very possibility of empirical knowledge (say, of the 'A has power over B if'....variety) rests on the ontological basis that to acquire knowledge about power in organisations involves innate knowledge (the knowledge that comes with being in the world) in this case about social life, and in particular, elements which have come to be referred to as power. Now the relationship between this innate knowledge component and the submerged world (constituted for example

in the symbol-rich nature of life) is surely a crucial issue in this formulation, but access to the relationship is another matter. One obstacle is that we cannot empirically distinguish between the innate component (which comprises the foundation for empirical knowledge, but is itself entangled with that empirical formulation) and intuitive knowledge (eg. that the submerged world will reveal.....)

Nevertheless the difficulties have produced an entirely unwarranted concentration upon empirical formulations, and the real irony lies in the fact that the inductive method (allocated to science by philosophers) which necessarily (if we allow the arguments of Russell and Quine etc.) relies on both rational and empirical elements comes to be rejected in favour of a schema of falsification (the hypothetico - deductive method) which has its very existence in empirical testing. The circle is complete. We cannot empirically (by testing) prove our empiricist/rationalist inductions (all swans are white for all time) therefore, we will set about empirically disproving our rationalist hypotheses! (swan colour will be held to be white for the time being). Again the specific meaning of rationalist intended here, is the version which is located in the idea that knowledge can be acquired by non-empirical means.

Thus the establishing of what is to count as knowledge cannot be empirically conceived in isolation from the possibility of a priori knowledge innate in the human condition, and truth (in knowledge) becomes even more problematic. (Can we obtain true knowledge from the submerged world of symbols?). Some philosophers have in fact tried to distinguish between absolute conceptions of truth and semantic conceptions of truth¹¹ which attempt to differentiate according to

the influence (or absence of influence) of language, but again this is really only sustainable in a schema which upholds the rationalist/empiricist separation.

The way in which science has traditionally been held to have some kind of exclusivity to truth determining statuses of knowledge is obviously now under question from a much more fundamental perspective than that knowledge is socially determined by the age, and paradigms/traditions dominating. It is now questionable in the very ontological status of the possible epistemology.

However all is not lost - just different. The very a priori ontological principles which deflate empiricism, may present the possibility of a new untold security in an innate dimension in which validity and relativism are no longer the monsters that they once seemed. We shall however, have to reconceive the scientific enterprise, which is not to nullify the obvious achievements of science, merely to argue that such achievements are in large part co-incidental to the methodologies - ie. like the simple addition of the speeds of two cars colliding head-on (eg. $30 + 30 = 60$ mph total collision speed) suffices for all practical purposes in earth's environment, even though Einstein established that this is demonstrably not so. Results are thus attributable much more realistically to the extent of the import of the empirical problematic on the particular case. This is undoubtedly to subscribe to a view that social science is more susceptible to such epistemological problems than is say, natural science, and further to suggest that explicating the submerged aspects (the symbolic) is a particularly susceptible area of the social world. Such an explication will

therefore necessitate relinquishing objective scientific absolutisms in favour of more problematic formulations. We shall perhaps have to let go, and let the water take our weight, since we cannot know in advance (in general terms) what such a conception of knowledge would look like. This would then also seem to be more consistent with a basing of research upon what the researcher feels 'really matters' rather than upon what techniques can 'solve' (which is akin to saying in the above analogy that perhaps what really matters is who was in the two colliding cars, and what happened to them!)

The idea of truth resting upon some a priori component, in addition to the empirically verifiable component, underlines in fact what philosophers have held to be a further condition of knowledge (in addition to truth) that of belief.

One of the traditionally conceived differences between truth and belief is that belief is fallible and truth is not. Thus historically, truth has been associated with empirical (scientific) knowledge, and belief with unscientific (including intuitive) knowledge (ie. not really knowledge) and innate a priori knowledge in the sense discussed here, not being a consideration. It has therefore been held that in some objectifiable way, truth could be established independently of the manifestation in which it occurred. Again however such a formulation rests on the rationalist/empiricist traditional separation, whereas it surely is not possible to extract truth from the human ontological possibilities for such establishment. Similarly with belief, the fundamental issue for the problem of what in social enquiry is to count as knowledge, is inexorably located in the status given to pronouncements from that enquiry. The epistemological

problem underlies the social status of the presentation and is tied to the nature of what is ontologically possible. Knowledge is thus constituted in the very essence of the subject, and not simply with respect to the social milieu (tradition) etc.

Belief-in-consequence (ie. all swans are-in-effect-white if we have no knowledge of any other colour) is not only the essence of common sense knowledge but is also the essence of any knowledge whatever the status (eg. scientific) attributed to it. An enterprise built upon falsification of white swan hypothesis, in that swans are held to be exclusively white until proved otherwise, seems to me to be indistinguishable from a belief that swans are white, at least during the period in which the hypothesis remains unfalsified. This therefore also raises further questions about the proposition that scientific enterprise is epitomised by the rigour of the operation and by the aims of the enterprise (eg. to demystify). The results are thus much more related to the expectations than to producing 'objective' knowledge. Indeed the whole basis of the schism between subjective and objective is founded on a misconception of what is ontologically possible. Knowledge-as-belief is just as likely to stem from allusion, allegory, literary metaphor, parable, simile, etc., as from rigorous conceptual investigation. Which is not to argue for the abandonment of rigorous investigation, merely to question the nature of its historically granted special status. As Roszak has suggested.

'While the art and literature of our time tell us with ever more desperation that the disease from which our age is dying is that of alienation, the sciences, in their relentless pursuit of

objectivity, raise alienation to its apotheosis as our only means of achieving a valid relationship to reality. Objective consciousness is alienated life promoted to its most honorific status as the scientific method.'¹²

There have been many other attempts to construct theories of knowledge based on various conceptions of truth and belief (eg. correspondence and coherence theories of truth, justification based on evidence and justification without falsity theories of belief¹³) but they have likewise been limited by the underlying traditional rational/empirical separation. What then is to be the fate of a science of society given such problems of knowledge?

Phenomenological Horizons

The problem of developing an orientation to the question of a confluence between the empirical and the a priori knowledge possibilities subsumes the further question of what is to count as empirical. Clearly this returns the discussion to the plausibility of the scientific programmes discussed previously, but now we have in addition a requirement that any such programme should also accommodate the idea of an epistemological a priori component which may place a further limitation on the plausibility of such a programme.

In fact a programme which is based on the idea that the world is out there as a separable objectifiable entity quite independent of the individual observing it, contains a sufficient paradox with the idea of a human ontological limited epistemological possibility as to make such a simplified view of the world untenable in this kind of proposition. Whilst not wishing to contradict the philosophical position that the

world exists independent of the individual observing it, (and thus opting for some kind of idealist mentalist position) nevertheless for the problem in hand the question is one of how that external world is experienced. This however raises the perhaps even more difficult question of how it is possible to conceive of elements of innate a priori knowledge in an alternative phenomenological framework which is based upon the idea that the world can only be assimilated through experience in all its mundanity. Traditionally this has been resolved philosophically by the positing of the idea of universals which are held to be self-evident. Such a resolution rests on the basis of intuitive knowledge, and as already suggested this is a conception separate to knowledge from experience, whereas what is required is a component upon which the possibility of such knowledge from experience can rest, although the two may not be (empirically) distinguishable.

To pursue this kind of problem we need to be very clear about the kind of question represented, indeed what kind of answer are we looking for? In asking questions about the basis of the a priori elements are we asking for such to be discovered as demonstrably the basis of such an entity, for clearly this is to confuse an empirical question with a non-empirical problem. The very essence of innateness surely precludes a formulation of its essence in an empirically verifiable manner.

In terms of the symbolic manifestations of power in organisations with which this thesis will be concerned, the impact of this problem is to complicate questions such as, 'How do we know that this is a ritual of control?' On the one hand we observe certain phenomena empirically

(from sense data) we order those empirical observations by imputing meaning (we ascribe 'ritual' as a category, and 'control' as a characterisation). Traditionally this imputation has been held to be based upon past (learned) experience. What we cannot know empirically (because we cannot demonstrate/prove it empirically) is the extent to which the intake of that sense data was structured by an innate a priori element which preceded the intake, and in fact made the intake, and the ordering, possible. Likewise we cannot differentiate between the extent of the structuring of the innate a priori, and the extent of the ordering from past experience. We shall not therefore gain much from constructing elaborate programmes (involving measurement, replication etc.) to demonstrate objectivity/validity etc. (notwithstanding the dubious activity of trying to do that with something so ethereal as an imputed ritual) as though knowing from sense data was subject only to filtering-out pre-orientations of past experience. Orientations are not simply derived from previous sense data inputs but in fact primordially structure the intake of sense data. Furthermore neither can we entirely differentiate a component of intuitive knowledge which tells us (however unreliably) that it feels right to consider the phenomena as a ritual of control, for such a component is also indeterminately entangled with both the innate a priori (to the extent that it cannot be empirically separated) and past experience pre-orientations (to the extent that it confuses the identification of such pre-orientations).

We know then that the phenomena under discussion represents a ritual of control only to the extent that intersubjectively (and based upon a 'reciprocity of perspectives' - see below) it makes sense to conceive of the phenomena in such a way. That is to say, reader 'owns' the

account of observer as meaningful for reader (ie. not because it is empirically provable, but because it is imputably transcendental).

The idea of innateness thus contains its own sense of order, unknowable in empirical terms but nevertheless having profound implications for the ordering of sense data and accordingly we need to construct the idea of human ontology prohibiting the possibility of passive receipt of information about the environment and erect the notion of the organising of experience through the medium of ideas in which there is an innate a priori component which does not rely on confirmation from, or proving by, experience. We need an empirical component in which the nature of that experience is related to, and organised by, the innate component. This suggests a subjective ordering of the world not only in relation to pre-orientations derived from past experience, but also grounded in an ontology which gives rise to the very ability to infer from, and orientate experience.

The experience of a phenomenological position thus needs to be underlain by the idea of a far from neutral ordering. Husserl in fact was concerned with this problem.

'From the point of view of theory of knowledge, the question of the possibility of experience (which, at the same time, is the question of the essence of experience) necessitates a return to the phenomenological data of which all that is experienced consists phenomenologically.'¹⁴

The essence of the world consists of all the elements of that world which are experienced and ordered in order to give the world meaning for the individual experiencing it. It makes no kind of sense to

attempt to conceive of a world capable of being experienced objectively since as Husserl argued.

'Everything in the world, all spatio-temporal being, exists for me because I experience it, because I perceive it, remember it, think of it in any way, judge it, value it, desire it, etc.'¹⁵

An objective stance can nevertheless serve as an ideal type (in the Weberian sense) for the formulation of an image towards which the formulation of a conception of intersubjective experience can be conceived.

Such a conception based on the idealisation that for all practical purposes individuals experience the world in largely the same way (what Schutz has called the 'reciprocity of perspectives'¹⁶) is indeed amenable to the possibility that individuals know the way of knowing the world to some extent innately.

The possibility of a science of society now however, seems to rest on the upholding of a distinction between the way in which individuals formulate and use such intersubjective experience in everyday life, and the way in which a social scientist might formulate and use such intersubjective experience.

One way out of this apparent trap is to postulate that what social scientists are doing is erecting second order constructs by attempting to 'order the ordering' (scientifically?) of experience. Thus they are concerned with not only the essence of the phenomena but the process by which that essence is accommodated and made sense of. The

ordering of experience is thus a subject of enquiry in addition to being the means of proceeding with the enquiry. Zimmerman and Pollner¹⁷ for instance in describing an ethnomethodological approach have argued for a distinction between topic (the way in which individuals order their experience - involving their assumptions, values, etc.) and resource (the fact that individuals do order their experience and the consequences thereof - eg. the kinds of ensuing social organisation).

This problem will be considered further, but first some preliminary remarks concerning the relationship of this second order to the question of a confluence of the empirical and the ontologically a priori elements of knowledge will be propitious.

In suggesting that any comprehensive consideration of what is to count as knowledge must take into consideration the elements of what is ontologically a priori, as suggested, many fundamental philosophical problems are raised. Problems such as the possibility of (or the extent of) knowing other minds; the relationship between the a priori and the empirical in terms of the ontology of intuition and introspection; the distinction between free will and determinism; etc. are paramount. In the course of this thesis it will be possible only to suggest that such problems impinge upon the issues at hand, and that the traditional neglect has not helped the progress of knowledge in sociology. For the purpose of this thesis therefore it will be assumed that there are fundamental problems of 'possibility' subsumed in the position being developed, but that such problems are inherent and part of the nature of being. Trying to construct knowledge about the human social situation is fraught with such problems, but they will

not go away by ignoring them or defining them out of existence - as a great deal of empiricist work has done. Indeed, for the purposes of this thesis, the problem of constructing second order formulations as the basis for a science of society will proceed on the assumption that such fundamental philosophical problems do not preclude such construction. If in due course such assumptions do indeed prove to be unfounded (in some as yet unknown dimension of knowing other minds) then the formulations here constructed, in being demolished, will at least have fared no worse than some more traditional formulations and may even (by provoking such investigation) have played a part in the very demolition that produces clarification.

The approach to the problem of the second order construct has drawn heavily on the German hermeneutic tradition from such writers as Dilthey.

Hermeneutics initially developed from a need to establish the authenticity or otherwise of scriptural texts available to the Christian world.¹⁸ There was a need to extract the 'real' version from the many copies that had been accumulated over the years. This particular emergence of hermeneutics was at its height in the sixteenth century with the argument between the different factions of christianity (Catholic-Protestant) as to the true authenticity of the scriptures. The extension of the task of hermeneutics from one of establishing the authenticity of documents into more of a concern with penetrating and capturing the meaning of human activity was underlain by particular changes taking place in successive centuries.

Kant's reconceptualisation of knowledge as being essentially problematic,

concerning the crucial role of the subject in all cognition, and Hegel's notion of the process of history as being a process in which knowledge of each era is attained by discovery of itself (by increasing consciousness) as the only essence of being, were both instrumental in the development of the idea of the hermeneutic circle.¹⁹ The idea of a hermeneutic circle is to suggest the notion of understanding as progressing by a process of continual re-appraisal and recapitulation (rather than by refining and reducing) towards better and less ambiguous knowledge. The output of such a hermeneutic enterprise would thus although being 'ever more selective,' be also 'ever more voluminous!'²⁰

Dilthey had arrived at a position in which he felt that historical knowledge had progressed as far as possible with the tradition-bound nature of historical understanding and this led him to abandon his aim of producing in history, a finite methodology producing a series of truth generating universal laws.²¹ Dilthey's position led him to regard the idea of knowledge being bounded by the constraint of inconclusivity, and this represented a challenge to be faced by science otherwise its claim to produce scientific results would indeed have to be abandoned to some kind of relativist position.²² Dilthey accordingly postulated that a distinction between understanding (verstehen) and explanation (erklären) and the way in which these different methods are synthesised is at the heart of the problem.²³ In fact it could be said that the history of such interpretive schemas has been one of attempting such a synthesis on the assumption that the possibility of a science of society rests on a synthesis between causal explanation and understanding being achievable.

There have been many attempts to develop the hermeneutic tradition and thereby argue for an incorporation into work carried out currently, and the perspectives of three recent writers in this vein (Outhwaite²⁴, Bauman²⁵, and Giddens²⁶,) are now analysed in preparation for the discussion of procedure in relation to this particular social enquiry. In each of the three perspectives (as with many other interpretive/phenomenological/ethnomethodological sociologies) there is an implicit rubric that to be doing sociology from such a perspective is to be doing science. It may be argued that such activity bears little relation to the kinds of activity discussed in the first section of the preceding chapter, but quite why the activity (of being methodical/systematic/rigorous etc) is constitutive of doing science is not articulated.

Outhwaite discusses developments in a framework which delineates between; the work of Rickert, Simmel and Weber; a dialectical tradition; and a phenomenological tradition. Outhwaite's programme clearly distinguishes between a science of society based upon a natural science conception and a conception which is based upon in some way extending what is already there.

'The social scientist must begin with data which are already partly interpreted in the ordinary language of everyday life. Moreover, social scientists cannot coherently aim to provide a natural science of human life, but rather to deepen, systematise and often qualify, by means of empirical and conceptual investigations, an 'understanding' which is already present.'²⁷

Clearly there is a rejection of natural science conceptions of a science of society, but there is a retention of the idea of being

rigorous in the notion of 'systematise'. The idea of 'qualifying' is presumably located in a conception of such systematising producing in some way a secure or superior knowledge, and the idea of deepening understanding is perhaps similarly founded. Any distinction between, for instance, science and art however (which is not to suggest that Outhwaite himself makes such a distinction) is still likely to founder with a concept such as deepening understanding. The idea of art deepening understanding (by deepening experiencing) is closely associated with the idea of an a priori knowledge component in that it is not possible to systematise some kinds of experience of art which (aesthetically?) appear to travel to the very essence of being, without any means of validating (or systematising substantively) the experience of that art.

In his conclusion Outhwaite in fact suggests that the kind of social science we formulate is much more tied to the purpose we postulate for such a social science rather than to a universally applicable means.

'I have tried to show that a decision about the proper place of an interpretive method in social theory involves fundamental choices about the proper purposes of such theories. Do we want a coherent system of general social laws, or a plurality of 'theories of the middle range,' or just a few isolated by well-confirmed conditional propositions? Or are we more concerned to deepen and systematise and enrich with empirical data the understanding of social life that we already have as participants? Do we want knowledge for the sake of prediction and control, or for the intrinsic pleasure of cultured contemplation, or to orientate the political action of a social group or movement?'²⁸

Here the preceding discussion of the attempts to synthesise the ideas of knowledge-as-understanding with knowledge-as-explanation is encapsulated in a formulation of alternative purposes. The idea that knowledge for the purposes of prediction and control, as against knowledge for intrinsic enjoyment (which does echo something of the science/art distinction), suggests alternative approaches to acquisition, is perpetuated. Yet clearly knowledge which is formulated for intrinsic enjoyment does not preclude its use for prediction and control. Indeed such a separation is founded on the assumption that prediction is a process which is only prediction if it involves 100% accuracy of prediction. The way individuals use knowledge is obviously much less systematised than this and social scientists are no exception. The abstracting of such an idea which becomes knowledge (in consequence) from an 'unsystematised' piece of work and the developing incorporation into a scientific corpus must be a condition of the human existence of scientists no matter how systematic or rigorous be their procedures. The very notion of an intuitive idea (often referred to as 'insightful') is in effect an expression of the confusion of an activity built upon the principle of induction yet proceeding by deduction because deduction is more scientific (conceived as provable empirically) than induction. The means have become the ends. The ends have become lost, and alternative resurgences of the means have been excluded because they do not now match the new ends. Meanwhile life goes on. Knowledge is compromised and science is ideology.

Bauman discusses the development of the hermeneutic tradition in a framework constructed around the idea of the constitution of understanding as being the work of alternatively, history, reason, and

life,²⁹ and in critically examining within this constructed framework argues for understanding as expansion of the 'form of life.'³⁰ Bauman conceptualises a typology for his discussion which sees the explanation/understanding split as comprising a delineation between rationalist and historicist, the former being seen to be concerned with the 'right' methods, the latter with conditions which give rise to freeing from historical limitations which in turn determine what are the right methods.³¹

The potential discontinuity between understanding and explaining is approached by Bauman in a historical hermeneutic setting by raising the kind of understanding with which hermeneutics is concerned to a higher plain than explanation as exemplified in the very history of the hermeneutic circle.

'It is difficult to see how any of the successive recapitulations can claim to be final and conclusive; still more difficult would be to substantiate this claim. The plight came to be seen as specific to the study of the social, presenting the 'understanding' sciences with problems unknown to the science bent on mere 'explaining'.³² (my emphasis)

The goal of explanation is thus not only inappropriate to the hermeneutic programme but is in some way inferior anyway to the production of understanding which is concerned with 'self-comprehension' and with 'penetrating and capturing the meaning of human deeds'.³³ The constitution of meaning is seen as stemming from the human condition being continually confronted with incomprehension.³⁴

The initial striving for knowledge then, is seen as part of the human condition and Bauman quotes Schopenhauer to support his thesis that this human condition is grounded in the pursuit of happiness as an urge (an effort) for there is no such thing as a state of happiness only a happiness possible as a purpose - as a liberation from suffering.³⁵ Thus the struggle against suffering is the programme of seeking happiness and is constituted in the eradication or attempt to eradicate misunderstanding and incomprehension. Misunderstanding is an obstruction which forces 'the brook of life to form eddies'.³⁶ Incomprehension is a form of suffering.

The form of suffering of incomprehension is located in the making of 'our situation uncertain, unpredictable, full of danger'.³⁷ This results in an effort to make the uncertain certain, the unpredictable predictable. This effort is understanding. It is an effort therefore not a state and hence the 'image' of understanding is the negative of the experience of incomprehension.³⁸

Knowledge of how to proceed is perceived as a task only when we do not know how to proceed, and such incomprehension leads to the effort to deal with uncertainty by submitting reality to our control. Thus there is in Bauman's schema the assumption of a shared intersubjective world involving the idea of a reciprocity of perspectives and the attempt to establish agreement or consensus about the things which form such incomprehension.³⁹ The achieving of such consensus is vested in the form of life and the artful practice of everyday life, and social science is, in part, a more sophisticated (rigorous-systematic?) way of protecting such consensus. Bauman in fact introduces the idea of a separately establishable truth. This truth

condition is independent of consensus and represents a protection against imposed consensus.

'The rules of achieving agreement (or communal consensus) are not, however, identical with the rules that guide the pursuit of truth; the problem of objective, or true, understanding cannot be, therefore, collapsed into that of consensus. Objective understanding is sought as a safeguard against imposed consensus, as an appeal against unacceptable outcome of negotiation. Objective understanding is sought, in a sense, as a surrogate of the control over the practical conditions of agreement. The urge for objective understanding as distinct from simply communal consensus is generated by the restrictions imposed upon equality and democracy by the structure of domination which underlies the negotiating process.'

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For Bauman therefore the very structure of domination in society necessitates the existence (or development) of a means of establishing a truth condition. How is this to be achieved?

Truth is in fact viewed in this schema as being in opposition to consensus and yet concurrently as 'the supreme standard of belief'.⁴¹

Absolute truth is seen to be (perhaps) unachievable as a state of knowledge, but indispensable for knowledge to exist. The pursuit of such truth and objectivity are seen to be anthropological not historical - they are 'transcendental conditions of the specifically human mode of existence'. Following Habermas⁴² Bauman thus sees the apparent difficulty of accounting for the relation between truth and understanding as being grounded in a mistaken location of rules which validate interpretations and causal explanations on the level of transcendental logic (eg. Kant's pure theoretical reason) instead of in the transcendental conditions of specifically human being-in-the-

world. Such a being-in-the-world however, seems to be based purely in experiencing being-in-the-world.

The task of sociology is then seen to be to gradually reduce the opposition between consensus and truth - by criticism of the consensus using the model of ideal communication.⁴³ Such a model involves exposing conditions of communication which lead to invalid, untrue consensus - and hence involving imposition - as 'distorted communication' (Habermas) by 'painstaking analysis of the transcendental conditions of rational agreement'⁴⁴ - rational in the sense of unrestricted and exercised by no force other than 'better' argument. The scientific method is thus one of criticism of comparison and of ideal type model.

'The specifically sociological form of such an engagement can only consist in the application of the general scientific method of criticism to the scrutiny of the consensus reached in society. In the same way as science employs the model of ideal experiment to expose and eventually eliminate flaws in the practice of scientists, so sociology employs the model of ideal communication to lay bare and eventually help to eliminate the flaws in the practice of societal consensus.'⁴⁵

The distinction between understanding and explanation is thus largely reformulated as a difference between understanding as achieving consensus - in response to an ontological condition of incomprehension - and true understanding, as a means of erecting an objective condition of knowledge. The possibility of the existence of innate a priori knowledge is not however considered in this light and indeed consideration of such possibilities (even the traditional tendency which would be to pose innate knowledge as relating to consensus

and empirical knowledge as relating to truth) deflates Bauman's distinction somewhat.

Giddens' treatment of the problem of the integration of understanding and explanation is placed in a framework of attempting to establish a way to proceed, in the shape of methodological rules. This is not intended to describe the way to do research but to illuminate some of the issues to be faced in carrying out practical research.⁴⁶ The aim is to produce a clarification of problems involved in formulations of ways to proceed in sociology, and therefore his title (*New Rules of Sociological Method*) can be read as being perhaps somewhat presumptuous (in the sense of presupposing that the clarification of problems could be formulated in this way) rather than as naively attempting to formulate procedures in the very causal terms (ie. generalised rules) which such an analytical enterprise must address.

Giddens' approach to the question of the difference between understanding and explanation is located in a critical analysis of the work and writings of Dilthey, Weber and Gadamer with respect to the attempt to establish an integration between understanding and explanation conceived as different forms of knowledge;⁴⁷ and with the work of Abel and Habermas with respect to the construction of a critical theory which complements hermeneutic and nomological sorts of endeavour.⁴⁸ The hermeneutic task is then formulated as one of in some way penetrating the frames of meaning of lay members of society thereby elevating the role of the social scientist to one of a second order using the same sorts of skills as these lay members.

'..... the social scientist of necessity draws upon the same sorts of skills as those whose conduct he seeks to analyse in order to describe it; generating descriptions of social conduct depends upon the hermeneutic task of penetrating the frames of meaning which lay actors themselves draw upon in constituting and reconstituting the social world.'

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The scientific enterprise of sociology is therefore seen as involving the constructing of a metalanguage with which to explicate the form of life, and in doing this is faced with what Giddens terms a double hermeneutic.

'..... Sociology, however, deals with a universe which is already constituted within frames of meaning by social actors themselves, and reinterprets these within its own theoretical schemes, mediating ordinary and technical language. This double hermeneutic is of considerable complexity, since the connection is not merely a one-way one (as Schutz seems to suggest); there is a continual 'slippage' of the concepts constructed in sociology, whereby these are appropriated by those whose conduct they were originally coined to analyse, and hence tend to become integral features of that conduct (thereby in fact potentially compromising their original usage within the technical vocabulary of social science).'

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The compromising of the metalanguage of sociology is thus posed as a fundamental problem in the process of knowledge formulation from social enquiry. Such a problem however in being conceived in negative terms (compromise must detract from the task of sociology) seems to suggest that lay actors and social scientists have consistently different purposes, whereas this is surely not (always) the case. Indeed the positing of an innate a priori element to knowledge acquisition would necessitate the substitution

of the concept of exchange (albeit asymmetrical) for compromise. Further, neither Giddens, Bauman or Outhwaite seem to entertain the possibility that the nature of being-in-the-world may be irretrievably bound up with the idea of retention of ambiguity in social life, as essential for the ability to invest meaning. Thus the whole idea of second order constructs (Giddens), expansion of the form of life by recapitulation (Bauman), and constructing a purposeful social science (Outhwaite) suggests a process of formalising which inevitably involves clearer definition and can only therefore move towards removing ambiguity. Ambiguity to the extent that it constitutes the means of investing meaning in social life is conceived in effect as undesirable for the programme set, yet this is to suggest destruction of the essence of social life. There is a real sense in which definition destroys meaning.

What then are the implications for procedure? If we need to retain ambiguity whilst formulating and expanding upon experience, and that experience cannot be conceived separately from an innate ordering of experience, then what is to be the status of empirical work in procedure?

Sociology as Epistemologically emerging Social Enquiry

If the kinds of ways in which the problems of sociology are to be settled has indeed not been clarified, and the tremendous concern with clarification as illustrated in the foregoing underlines that this is so, then how is it possible to set about doing social enquiry at all? Does the problem of not knowing how to proceed necessarily produce paralysis in proceeding?

The approach formulated by Berlin concerning how to proceed when faced with a question which we do not know how to answer, is to attempt to conceptualise what kind of a question we are faced with. To the extent that we do not know what is to count as knowledge (at least absolutely) in social enquiry, we are faced with an epistemological question which therefore we must approach epistemologically. We must attempt to formulate and reformulate the kind of question which such a problem presents, within the doing of social enquiry.

The way to proceed must be an epistemologically based procedure in which the approach constitutes an attempt to formulate the criteria of knowledge. The actual method to be undertaken to satisfy the criteria of knowledge is therefore problematic. In one way, science and being scientific is then much less of an issue, in that the development of science is seen simply as a certain way of viewing the history of philosophy. Moreover in this procedure it is also debatable (as well as perhaps immaterial!) whether the way to proceed constitutes doing sociology or doing philosophy.

Gellner's programme⁵² of attempting to formulate the criteria for knowledge within a sustained social investigation has been expanded into a four point programme.⁵³

Firstly, there must be an empiricist insistence that faiths must stand ready to be judged by evidence which is in some way independent of forces which might press for confirmation of the faith itself. The argument that experience is never pure must not result in notions of experience being of no consequence to knowledge formulations on the grounds that it is corruptable and therefore not reliable. Experience

with due reverence must be retained.

Secondly, there must be an insistence upon impersonal, structural explanations based on the idea that we may be constrained to think so, rather than any certainty that the world may be amenable to such explanation. Such explanations will of course take on a variety of forms, within the confines of providing a means of public formulation and repeatability which will contain a dehumanising price for such cognitive effectiveness. Thus the price to be paid for real knowledge is a loss of individuality - a loss of identity.

Thirdly, the acceptance of forms of life which are indeed individualistic, identifiable and culturally nationalistic, but separate and distinguishable from formulations attempting to establish real knowledge about such accepted (ie. not attributed with any absolute notions of existence) examples of multifarious forms of life.

Fourthly, a concern with the specific development of our own industrial civilisation and not with the 'development of all things'.

This schema of Gellner's recalls in many ways the programme put forward by Comte ('examine the relation of sociology to the natural sciences') at least in respect to Comte's awareness of the problems of the programme set. Furthermore, Comte's 'vicious circle' although so often declared 'positivist', has more than a feel of the hermeneutic circle to it. The extent to which such a programme can be formulated as science is however another matter. Science has been alternatively formulated as being; systematic; rigorous; based on natural science;

building laws; building second order constructs; reformulating already possessed knowledge; giving greater depth; etc. and one task of any social analysis ought to be to formulate an orientation to this position. It is apparent that a general programme of procedure is foreign to the idea of formulating an orientation to this problem, and thus methodology and epistemology can only be reflexive and emergent with content, in any formulation which seeks to address this problem seriously.

Gellner's insistence on the retention of a component of knowledge stemming from experience is formulated as it were, as a defence against becoming the victim of blind faith. Unfortunately the social world is entrenched in blind faith, in the shape of ideology and myth as demonstrated in the substantive subject of this thesis. The extraction of some kind of extra-terrestrial (truth-objectivity or whatever) which is to be obtained by the retention of an experience component is fraught with difficulty, since naturally that experience is constructed within a framework of such continual distortion. To the extent that Gellner is saying that this is all we have, so we had better retain and use it, all very well, and the thesis will indeed examine the distortion/knowledge problem on these dimensions. There is however a further underlying problem constituted in the extent of the a priori component in knowledge. If that is indeed so, how do we differentiate between what is innate reproduced as faith and innate reproduced as truth, and does the Gellner programme stand up faced with this kind of problem - and does it need to? Does it matter? Is a science of society built upon those kind of differentiations possible given the nature of the being-in-the-world existence of humans as reflexively experiential. Can ambiguity be 'harnessed' in

any way?

The tension between the specific (not being concerned with all things) in Gellner's programme and the loss of individuality in the construction of real knowledge (cognitive effectiveness), is perhaps an unnecessarily constructed tension since it seems at least possible (in for instance such formulations as that of Bauman's) that the very 'form of life' is enriched by the (inevitable) pursuit of such programme, as the essence of developing society. Indeed Gellner himself has argued that a science of society is a feature of advancing society precisely because such a feature is itself an expression of something which (inevitably) comes to be defined as an advance.⁵⁴ Deciding when an advance is not an advance is again a part of the same 'form of life' - reflexive and developmental - and cannot be subjected to external objective prerequisites independent of the very developing 'form of life' itself (the search for such objective category verifiable knowledge). The way to proceed is thus in itself an investigation of the way to proceed - which is not to suggest that there are not methodological paths to tread. Indeed the enquiry now gathers pace in a more positive vein as the emphasis moves specifically to gathering knowledge about power in organisations.

Towards Procedure

The emerging nature of this particular enquiry begins in the strands of incomprehension related in the Introduction. The incomprehension is located in the problem of knowledge and collecting valid data (eg. about the incidence of tarantula's in Yorkshire) and with the concern about the kinds of things which epitomised what it is to be a Manager at Wenslow Manufacturing Co. (eg. the placing of pencils on files in

drawers so as to detect the incidence of infiltration into supposedly private places, and the 'speaking' of ties).

One clarification necessary at the outset is to make some kind of distinction between the terms, 'way of life' and 'form of life', both of which have been used to refer in some way to capturing facets of social life. Specifically in this thesis the use of the expression 'way of life' will refer to all the elements of what it is to be a Manager in the organisations from which examples are taken. The 'way of life' thus concerns facets of competent membership, but particularly the factors which seemed to me to be important to convey to someone without my privileged knowledge of the organisations, something of the essence of being a Manager.

The term, 'form of life' in this thesis will be used to refer to the wider aspects of being a person with a complex social world in which to seek meaning. The 'form of life' therefore concerns all that is involved in being human, and particularly for this thesis the concern with formulation and expansion of experience as a necessary and inevitable part of human social being.

The 'form of life' will of necessity include the 'way of life' of some members, together with all the other possible ways of life of other members, and more specifically for this enquiry, the means by which some (theoreticians or whatever) members attempt to formulate/capture such 'ways of life' (by for instance constructing second order constructs). The relationship between the knowledge formulation of members such as Managers in organisations and theoreticians (conceived by Giddens as the problem of the double hermeneutic) is the essence

of the emergent nature of this enquiry for an investigator who was a Manager himself and whose journey involves a development from formulating the 'way of life' into formulating the 'form of life' - from learning the artful practice in performance (involving making the uncertain certain-the unpredictable predictable) into critically formulating (capturing) the 'way of life' as a means of expanding the 'form of life'.

Such formulating must however be grounded in the substantive essence of the content under observation, rather than attempting to construct general second order constructs independent of the action which is the subject of the observation. As Bourdieu has argued in criticising the interactionism which results in conceptions of 'constructs of constructs' as in Schutz' scheme or 'accounts of accounts' as in Garfinkel's scheme.

'Only by constructing the objective structure (price curves, chances of access to higher education, laws of the matrimonial market, etc.) is one able to pose the question of the mechanisms through which the relationship is established between the structures and the practices or the representations which accompany them'

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Such grounding is however not simply a matter of ensuring the basis of formulation, there is also a question of the status of such formulations. Being continually subject to reinforcement by incorporation enhances the capacity for ensuing distortion. As Bourdieu has further warned.

'Native theories are dangerous not so much because they lead research towards illusory explanations as because they bring quite superfluous reinforcement to the intellectualist tendency inherent in the objectivist approach to practices.'⁵⁶

The giving of an account of an account is therefore subject to the problem of officialisation, given that the account of the account is accepted as making a contribution (of course even if it is not accepted, that may have the effect of reinforcing the officialisation of some other preferred account). Accounts of accounts must therefore seek to develop a reflexive epistemological status, ie. whilst accepting a status at one level of being one account (of numerous possible accounts) must seek to relate and ground in the context, why such an account is meaningful for the observer in relation to the substantive issue.

This thesis seeks to approach the problem by focusing upon certain incidents (conceptualised as manifestations of power) which seemed to illustrate something of the essence of being a Manager (ie. significant for capturing the way of life). The materials were collected in note form written as soon as possible after occurrence, with a view to formulating and expanding upon experience (although not specifically conceptualised as a process of developing the form of life at that time). The bulk of the materials collected were supplemented by other materials collected during the emergence of the thesis, and also with further examples from memory of less recent organisational experience.⁵⁷ In that the material has been selected then to illustrate some aspects of organisational life, which I 'read' as being significant, I shall not be concerned with generating alternative

accounts (in the sense of doing conversational analysis) my selection being informed by my emerging frameworks during observation and subsequently during transforming my 'reading' into writing.

The procedure is therefore based upon an attempt to bridge the gap between the phenomenological accounts of organisational members (ie..... this is what they said) and a possible structural significance (ie..... this is how I made sense of what they said or didn't say). The imputation of meaning by myself is thus in one sense simply an account of accounts (from my position of having to demonstrate competent membership) from a privileged position; but in quite another sense is an attempt to overcome the ontological impossibility of a phenomenology of other minds, by positively using 'the privilege'.

The approach thus developed in a manner influenced by certain anthropological studies in which, 'prior hypotheses about the phenomena are more often seen as an impediment than a help'.⁵⁸ This has been amplified by Dalton in his classic study 'Men who Manage'⁵⁹ arguing that one of the advantages of participant observation is that the researcher is not bound by fixed and sometimes crippling research plans.

Margaret Mead perhaps captured some of the essence of this tradition.

'.... Of course psychologists often find it difficult to understand our methods - the fact that we go to live amongst a people, without any preconceptions, and that anything we discover is interesting and important for understanding'⁶⁰

This social analysis can be seen then as constituting a library thesis written (ie. analytically and theoretically constructed) from fieldnotes obtained from a period of observation as a participant living amongst the Managers (during which time analytical and theoretical frameworks began to emerge) and supplemented by subsequent return during the writing.

Observation was the central means of obtaining data and the emerging nature of this observation and the necessity of approaching methodology as reflexive with content is amply demonstrated in the obvious inappropriateness of other means of collecting data on the submerged aspects of power (as contained in the symbols of organisational life) which could only destroy data. For example, any attempt to 'take a photograph' (ie. measure with some instrument of research) of a ritual would almost certainly collapse the ritual. This is not simply to suggest a horses for courses approach to methodology, since horses cannot metamorphose during a race, and courses tend to confine themselves to established programmes. Furthermore, it is evident that in addressing the submerged world it is far easier to breed the data required from respondents presented with an instrument of research, and consequently this thesis has approached the subject by using what is already there as a mundane part of organisational life.

The thesis particularly centres upon the treatment of Manager's talk as constituting accounts in the ethnomethodological sense of 'the accountable character of affairs,'⁶¹ and the material is presented in a literary style⁶² in an attempt to transport the reader, and convey more than just the words, thereby achieving a degree of transcendence

of the problem of my prescence⁶³ and the reader's absence at the event. To aid this transcendence and convey more of what it is to be a member of the organisations concerned, further excerpts from conversations etc. and company documents together with evocative extracts from literature have been interspersed at various relevant points in the analysis.

As suggested, my account (of accounts) in that it is informed by my presence at the event, is a privileged account, but since the privilege may result in an account which (rather than representing a problem generally conceptualised as a methodological problem of bias)⁶⁴ produces insights, truisms, and confusions at the same time, then the account is merely a persuasive account.⁶⁵ The persuasiveness is revealed in the relationship between the writer (as observer) and the reader in the extent to which the reader is prepared to own the account of the writer.⁶⁶

This chapter has examined some of the theories of knowledge which have been put forward, and it has been suggested that there are serious problems underlying any attempt to conceive a purely empirical basis for knowledge. The problems derive from the nature of human social being and are such that a construing of empirical knowledge as a construction of sense data is only possible given an ontologically innate facility for learning. It has been argued from this that the hypothetico-deductive model conception of scientific enterprise, can only be a partial conception at best, since such a model is grounded in a view of the aim of knowledge construction as the production of absolute generalisable laws of the nature of formal mathematics, which is anathema to understanding the social world and

moreover, sense data is not amenable to such a schema. It has been suggested that something more than knowledge built upon 'pure' sense data is required for 'all swans to be white' for all time. The paradox is nevertheless that for all practical purposes human action is so often based upon a belief that 'all swans are indeed white' that such knowledge-in-consequence does not and cannot be excluded from social analysis. It is its very essence.

Some of the attempts to formulate the carrying out of social analysis deriving from a hermeneutic tradition have been reviewed, and it has been argued that procedure must be based upon a conception of epistemology and methodology as emergent and reflexive, in which the status of sense data in relation to innate bases of formulating such sense data is treated as problematic. Procedure is thus conceived as 'giving an account' based upon the subject's particular ontological orientation and biography. This is not to reduce the responsibility of the subject, in the sense of being less methodical or rigorous, but is to increase the responsibility of the reader, as distinct from the subject, in isolation, trying to pin on his flag of validation.

The thesis now turns more specifically to the study of power. The following chapter takes up the first stage of this programme in an examination of theories of power in organisations propounded in the literature, in preparation for the counterposed analysis of my own organisational experience.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK¹

This chapter is concerned with developing a theoretical framework within which to explicate the particular features which seemed to capture something of the essence of being a Manager in the organisations concerned. There are of course vast differences between the organisations, and some of these differences will be discussed, however, the actual focus of this social enquiry will be upon the factors which struck the writer as being similar (or amenable to similar description and analysis).

Various occurrences and accounts given to me (eg. the placing of a pencil on a file in a drawer in order to detect the incidence of infiltration into supposedly private places - related in chapter one) led me to turn to theories of power as a potential means of understanding. The fact that such theories as propounded in the literature did not seem to align, or be too relevant to my experience, eventually gave rise to this thesis. The 'choosing' of power, however, as a theoretical framework for explicating the way of life of being a Manager, merely underlines the idea that any attempt to undertake such a task can only comprise a persuasive account since it is not only the way of doing and presenting the analysis which is persuasive, but also the substantive content (as chosen). It would have been possible to construct an account (of accounts) concentrating, for instance, upon stress as a means of capturing the way of life.

The concentration upon power then, is simply one way of approaching the way of life, and the foundations of such a persuasive account are laid in this chapter in a review of the treatment of power in the literature.

Power in Organisations

The considerable attention given to power in the study of organisations is indicative of the importance attached to the concept. Whether seen as a desire to understand (as though this were a neutral, value free process) or more actively as a need to control, and whether examined explicitly as in much of the sociological literature, or implicitly as in much of the management literature (for example in theories of leadership and motivation) the attention given has resulted in a multitude of approaches. Despite this widespread attention, the notion of power is still regarded by many, as an elusive and opaque term. This perceived elusiveness derives from a number of crucial assumptions, inherent in so many of the studies of power in organisations.

A good deal of the work done on power implicitly adopts a theoretical indifference towards contextual features, thus neglecting such issues as how people come to be in a position to exercise power, and taking for granted the impact of historical and societal factors.² In addition, there is a great deal of confusion surrounding the usage of terms like power, authority, control and influence. This arises largely from the theory of meaning subscribed to, which in turn derives from the particular underlying conception of social analysis (or science, sic). Broadly this may be said to relate to whether it is held that a concept, like power, can be defined as pertaining to an

object which can be measured, or, as obtaining its meaning from its context or use. The first approach (echoing a more positivist conception) has led to a synonymic view (synonymic in the sense that different words come to have the same meaning) such that terms like control, power, influence, etc. become almost interchangeable. It has involved a concern with establishing similarities between these terms and attributing those similarities as manifestations or even properties of power. If, however, the meaning of a concept is taken to be dependent on its use and context (echoing a more phenomenological conception) then the question becomes one of establishing attributed meanings of the terms, thereby concentrating on differences in addition to similarities in describing situations and phenomena. This is essentially a homonymic view (homonymic in the sense that the same word may come to have different meanings).³

Furthermore, the attribution of positive or negative values, depending upon such factors as, an individual's position and orientation, and the prevailing ideas and definitions, is problematic to the study of concepts such as power. One illuminating example of this is the way in which negative values are attributed to the term influence, and in accordance with the synonymic view the term is often associated with (and sometimes replaced by) the term, manipulation.

The review undertaken here is approached from a homonymic stance, examining the myriad meanings attributed to three terms which appear repeatedly in the literature - power, control and domination.

Power

A foundation, upon which much of the work done on power has been

built, was laid by Weber. He provided a definition which has been used, and misused, interminably.

'Power is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests.'⁴

In this definition Weber made a distinction between position and basis, and the basis envisaged formed the core of his discussion of authority. In making a distinction between power and authority, Weber thus produced an intentionally restricted definition of power, locating it with respect to position (ie. propensity of an actor to be in a position to carry out his own will, as distinct from his social or physical position which relates to the basis of the definition).

Dahrendorf identified power as a property of individuals rather than a property of social structures in which the concern is with individual in position, rather than simply the position. This is confusing when related to Weber's definition, and Dahrendorf attempted to clarify by arguing that power is associated with the personality of individuals (that one actor will be in a position in terms of Weber's definition) whilst authority is associated with social position (that one actor will have the basis in Weber's definition).⁵ The attempted clarification is unsuccessful largely due to the failure to give adequate consideration to legitimacy which is a complex but fundamental issue. Dahrendorf subsequently rejected power as a sociologically meaningful term and argued for a concentration upon an individual-force kind of perspective.⁶

This illustrates the importance of the kind of assumptions one makes about the concept of power. The issue revolves around whether one sees power as a thing in itself or as a notion whose meaning is always dependent on its use and context. To say that, 'Here is an aspect of a situation - this is power', as Dahrendorf suggests (a synonymic approach) is fundamentally different from saying 'what does it mean to say that this is power in this situation?' (a homonymic approach).

The idea of power being related to position, in the sense of propensity to exercise power (to the neglect of basis) has been widely used by theorists developing a conceptualisation of power as involving an exchange process. Typically the concern of exchange theories of power is with identifying and categorising the social bases of power, but these bases are derived from a notion of ability to exchange, related to an isolated interaction framework, which neglects or takes for granted considerations of authority and legitimacy.

Blau defined power in this framework as,

'... the ability of persons or groups to impose their will on others despite resistance through deterrence either in the form of withholding regularly supplied rewards or in the form of punishment, inasmuch as the former, as well as the latter constitute a negative sanction.'⁷

This approach to power (which illustrates some of the emotive and contextual problems inherent in the view - how regular does a reward have to be before withholding it constitutes a negative sanction? - and who decides?) has led to attempts to categorise power along reward/punishment kinds of dimensions, and one of the most influential

theories in this tradition has been French and Raven's identification of five sources of power.

- (a) Reward power - based on the belief that a reward can and will be forthcoming
- (b) Coercive power - based upon a belief that punishment can and will be forthcoming
- (c) Expert power - based on the possession of some special skill or knowledge
- (d) Referent power - based upon some factor which is attractive to identify with
- (e) Legitimate power - based on the belief that it is in some way 'right' for power to be exercised.⁸

The final category is the nearest that the work comes to considering the basis in Weber's definition, but in presenting this as an alternative (even allowing the argument that the categories are not mutually exclusive) the inherent nature of authority and legitimacy is ignored.

An alternative development of the idea of one actor exercising power in an interactive situation has been to approach power from a behavioural perspective. As Dahl has argued.

'.... power terms in modern social science refer to sub-sets of relations among social units such that the behaviour of one or more units depend in some circumstances on the behaviour of other units.'⁹

This is generally expressed in the form of, 'A has power over B,' or to place this more firmly in a behavioural framework, involving the suggestion of a stimulus/response relationship, as Simon has argued.

'A's behaviour causes B's behaviour.'¹⁰

In this view of power, theorists within the community power debate framework have been concerned with measuring power by attempting to establish the influence of different individuals and groups in key issue areas. This Reputational approach is a further example of the problems of the synonymic perspective. In the studies of Dahl¹¹ and Hunter¹², for instance, no attempt is made to define power for the respondents who are asked to indicate the most important members of a community with respect to influencing decisions made. Influence is implicitly equated with power synonymically, and further, no attempt is made to distinguish between perceived ability to exercise power, and actual exercise of power. There have been many studies of power in a behavioural framework,¹³ and although most are societally based rather than organisationally based, work is derivatively important to the development of strategic contingencies theory.

Both the behavioural view of power in emphasising the dependency of some upon others, as an axiomatic response in a causal relationship, and the exchange view based on an assumed need or drive to exchange, concentrate solely on the position element in Weber's definition. The neglect or taking for granted of the contextual framework, and the failure to relate the work to Weber's conception of authority, gives rise to an oversimplified view of power. Nevertheless, Hickson et al¹⁴ drawing on these two approaches have developed a strategic contingencies

theory of power. This theory conceptualises an organisation as a number of interdepartmental units which interact with each other and with their environments in a systems framework. Power is explained by the concept of differential sub-unit power which is dependent upon contingencies ensuing from varying combinations of, (a) coping with uncertainty (the more a sub-unit copes with uncertainty, the greater its power within the organisation); (b) substitutability (the lower the substitutability of the activities of a sub-unit, the greater its power within the organisation); and (c) centrality (the higher the pervasiveness and immediacy of the work flows of a sub-unit, the greater its power within the organisation).

Unfortunately, this theory, by not giving due attention to the basis of these positions, perpetuates this oversimplified account of power. It does, however, provide a useful framework which could be integrated with one derived from an emphasis on factors like context, authority and legitimacy in a move towards a more homonymic stance on power.

Control

Many of the weaknesses discussed become more apparent in considering work on this topic. Generally authority is taken as given in some way, and the need for some to exercise control over others is an unexamined assumption, undoubtedly underlain by the effort to make the uncertain certain identified in the previous chapter as so much a part of the human condition.

Most text books on General Management, Management Accountancy, Statistics for Management, etc are full of detailed descriptions of

multitudes of financial or statistical control methods and procedures (eg. Brech¹⁵, Batty¹⁶). Many of these methods have been developed into institutional controls extending this neglect into positive depersonalisations. Thus, budgetary control, standard costing, production control procedures, quality control procedures, are seen as techniques of control in which human factors are regarded as a source of trouble, irritation, or even (in a perfect example of the problematic nature of emotive connotations) as an impingement upon the sovereignty of control.

The emotive aspect of this view is a problem because this depersonalisation is at the heart of 'administrative logic'.¹⁷ This logic, based upon a perceived requirement for what Behrendt¹⁸ has called, 'a high degree of calculability' (the evaluation of success being based in profitability leading to a need for calculability of profitability) is in basic conflict with the unpredictability and complexity of organisational life. This conflict has severe consequences for the control sought by managerial elites who risk losing their positions if results are unsatisfactory,¹⁹ and this fear so often leads to efforts at efficiency of control rather than efforts at efficiency. The exercising of such control by managerial elites (or the 'dominant coalition' as Child²⁰ has termed such groups) points firmly to the consideration of authority and legitimacy as the basis of Weber's definition quoted at the outset.

Weber²¹ in discussing authority²² elaborated a classification which distinguished three basic forms, charismatic, traditional and rational-legal,²³ and argued that the claim to legitimate authority

'.... on a belief in the "legality" of patterns of normative rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands.'²⁴

This whole aspect forms the core of the considerations of domination in the next section, but is developed here to underline the importance of the neglect or taking for granted of these factors in discussions of control.

The taking for granted of these factors is apparent in much of the management literature on leadership and motivation. In Fiedler's contingency theory of leadership, one of the significant variables is leader's power position, which is defined as, '....the potential power which the organisation provides for the leader's use.'²⁵ This reification conceals the derivation of such a situation. In cybernetic theory the organisation is conceptualised in terms of a systems perspective, similar to that of strategic contingencies theory. Again the need to control seems to be taken for granted.²⁶ Similarly a lot of attention has been paid to decision making, but the basis underlying such a process is presumably regarded as inconsequential.²⁷

The whole idea then of some exercising control over others, deriving from the underlying human striving to decrease the incomprehension inherent in existence, lies like a shroud over the theory of organisations. There have been some useful recent attempts to examine the effects of the shroud on specific organisational members (eg. Legge²⁸, and Watson²⁹, with respect to Personnel Managers) but

work which attempts to get under the shroud (thereby threatening the dominant means of decreasing incomprehension) continues (as might be expected) to be treated as in some strange or deviant³⁰. Paradoxically (for conceptions of the scientific enterprise that is) it is in the work of writers such as Kafka that the essence of the submerged elements of control are most illuminatingly addressed. The evasive nature of the shroud is really highlighted in the way in which, in 'The Castle', K is never able to isolate either the location of the castle or its inhabitants, or indeed the very means by which 'they' are able to control his everyday life.

Domination

Studies of organisations concerned with aspects of domination, have generally involved a more comprehensive treatment of authority and legitimacy. Indeed, one of Weber's central concerns was the way in which organisations gain control of their environments achieving 'dominating power' in society.

By domination, Weber indicated that an imbalance of power existed which structured social action such that any understanding would have to consider that asymmetrical situation as central. An important manifestation of domination in Western Societies was identified by Weber as arising from the need to demonstrate success against evaluation criteria by, managerial elites (which is not to overlook unanticipated consequences of action). He suggested that the way in which organisations develop asymmetrical power, and how that could be politically controlled, were central problems for organisational analysis.

Unfortunately, these problems have not been given much attention by theorists, and organisation theory has thus seen many studies which have emphasised the way in which organisations adapt to their environments rather than how 'they' seek to control it. Further, this reification again neglects the fact that it is managerial elites (in other words individuals - or an individual) who act, and that it is the underlying rationality of the strategies of managerial elites, which is crucial. In this context rational takes on a historically specific meaning, rationality being fundamentally related to the rules which are at the core of Weber's concept of domination. Rules are formed from the domination strategies which develop (from for example, the need for calculability) rationality justifies these strategies and aids perpetuation of the rules. This reflexive relationship underlines the necessity of a homonymic approach to power since clearly the rules and rationalities³¹ are fundamentally determined by context.

A study which does take a more homonymic view concentrating on the importance of rules and rationalities has been carried out by Clegg,³² who arrives at a development of Weber's original ideas, via a critique of previous work on power, using the linguistic philosophy of Wittgenstein to illustrate how language confusions have rendered theorising in power impotent. Although Clegg's work is not without its own confusions,³³ it does represent a significant return to factors concerned in the basis referred to in Weber's original definition.

A completely different view of power has been taken however, by those

who regard the existence of asymmetrical relationships as endemic

to collective organisation. Parsons for instance has argued.

'Power then is generalised capacity to secure the performance of binding obligations by units in a system of collective organisation when the obligations are legitimised with reference to their bearing on collective goals, and where in case of recalcitrance there is a presumption of enforcement by negative situational sanctions - whatever the actual agency of the enforcement.'³⁴

This argument is based on a co-operative or consensus view, and by replacing conflict with consensus, Parsons defines out of existence the problems at the centre of Weber's argument in respect of the basis of power.³⁵

The argument between conflict and consensus proponents is the source of much emotive debate (for example in relation to manipulation) and this is nowhere more apparent than in the treatment of Marxist theory. This is unfortunate, since a Marxist perspective (notwithstanding diverse interpretations) has potentially much to contribute to our understanding of organisational life by locating it within a specific historical and societal context, in which organisations are viewed as inexorably involved in the social world, and patterns of domination in society are, therefore, necessarily reproduced in the organisation, with organisations being inevitably the means of perpetuating a certain pattern of domination.³⁶ The utility of Marxist theory as an analytical tool although diminished by the emotive connotations associated with Marxism as a Utopian 'Liberation Theory'³⁷, and by the contentious issue of false consciousness, may be rescued in essence by Bourdieu's³⁸ idea of domination acquiring a symbolic permanence deriving

from an 'avoiding of consciousness', enabling a less emotive conceptualisation to be made, which still retains the hidden Kafkaesque elements referred to in the discussions of social control.

Such a symbolic permanence suggests an essentially self-constituting and contextually reflexive view of power in which submerged elements can only be identified by examining the factors which conceal, precisely because the demonstration of power is not necessary. This is confirmed in the inter-relationship between the submerged, and the observable aspects by, for example, the expression of power which has been held, and conversely the expectation of power which has been demonstrated (eg. the power to reverse a decision is something which does not have to be expressed, and yet everyone knows). Traditional approaches to power, in that they have attempted generalised definitions and thereby treated the concept synonymically (equating power with other terms such as influence, authority), have neglected the submerged aspects and resulted in incomplete and sometimes misconstrued theories.

This concentration upon the observable/definable/synonymic aspects has resulted in a neglect of submerged/symbolic/homonymic aspects precisely because scientific enterprise has been dominated by efforts to remove the very ambiguity which sustains symbols in the submerged world. Legitimation processes rely upon ambiguity to conceal, and removal of that ambiguity by 'refining' must necessarily concurrently close access to the essential hegemony of social hierarchy. In attempting to transcend this 'refining process' (by constructing a persuasive account built upon imputed meaning) this thesis seeks to

illuminate something of this submerged world and argues that such submerged aspects can be viewed homonymically as symbolic manifestations of power.

This chapter has reviewed some of the more influential theories of power in organisations, and has highlighted the essential incompleteness due to the reliance upon observable features of organisations typically resulting in formulations of the 'A has power over B if.....' variety. Considerations of domination have been more fruitful, although it is only recently that some of the pertinent arguments of for instance Weber, have received the attention they deserve. It is in the essentially Weberian idea of a bureaucratic structure of domination, representing the hierarchical nature of organisational relations, that the illumination of the submerged aspects of power, as constituted in the symbol-rich nature of organisational life, will be approached in the following chapters.

THE RIGHT TO MANAGE¹

One source of confusions in the treatment of power in organisations is located in the conception of the nature of management which underlies, and is taken for granted in, many studies. Management in such studies is assumed to be concerned with a process of control or motivation of some by others. The basis of this ability to control is considered to be located in the possession of certain rights. The derivation of these rights (eg. the right to manage) is not considered and this neglect results in the rights being treated as given, and, to the extent that they become regarded as absolute rights, transformed into duties (which are thereby not open to question). The acceptance of such common sense assumptions without examination, results in management being treated as in some way a neutral process existing as a normative self-evident part of organisational life.

Any examination of the symbolic nature of organisational life therefore needs to address the derivations of the assumptions which underlie the way in which managers construct their everyday worlds

One of the main concerns expressed by managers² at Wenslow Manufacturing Company, is articulated as an undermining or eroding of authority. This attack on authority is seen as coming from two separate hierarchical directions. On the one hand Functional Directors are said to be interfering too much in the detailed managing of operations, highlighted by statements such as, '... why doesn't he just let me get on with the job ...', 'how can anyone be expected to manage in this

place, when every little thing has to be referred to a Director', '... well they don't really want bloody Managers here, they want messenger boys...', '... it's always the same in this place - never mind the ball, get on with the fucking game!' On the other hand, quite independently of this, the shop floor are said to be too intent upon taking over the running of operations. This is illustrated by statements such as, '.... I cannot make decisions any more, I have to negotiate them ...', '... it represents a threat to my right to manage....', '... they'll be paying their own bloody wages next!'

The attacks upon managerial authority then, are perceived as originating from two separate directions, as an erosion from below and an undermining from above. I shall argue that the two perceived attacks are in fact two sides of the same coin. On the one hand the perceived erosion from below relies on a certain reading of the nature of the job of a manager, as though the nature of the job was some kind of absolute, rather than representing merely a particular historical derivation. On the other hand, the undermining from above can be seen as a natural progression from the inherent assumptions about the right to manage, which define the attack from below as an erosion. A conception of legitimate authority as though it were some kind of absolute has produced concurrently, a desire to enforce the perceived absolute, and challenge against the manifestations of the absolute.

The perpetuation of the idea of the right to manage as being an inherent feature of nature rather than a result of particular historical developments, is fuelled by the treatment of the issue in the media.³ The implicit assumption of the sovereignty of the status-quo pervades almost all discussion of industrial problems. Indeed, one of the

most prevalent themes of the popular press is the extent to which trades unions (as the custodians of workers' interests) are involved in, and responsible for, directions of social change, which are considered to be in some way regressive and sinister. Contributions to the theme generally raise power as an issue, with statements such as '... the unacceptable use of industrial power...', '... trade unions are too powerful ...', '... they are holding the country to ransom...', or more implicitly, '... trade unions have outlived their usefulness...'

The inherent suggestion is that power is an entity which can be acquired and exercised according to some presumed principle of force. Naturally, any notion entertaining the use of force attracts considerable attention, and a concern with developing and presenting a tenable position towards upholding certain codes of conduct is given prime importance. Any perceived acquisition or exercise of power therefore, which cannot be related to the propounder's implicit paradigm of right is defined as subversive.

The relationship between power and right is crucial in this argument, but treatment of the issues involved is not very illuminating. Confusions might be expected from commentators working under the debilitating pressure to sell copy, but unfortunately (until more recently) organisation theorists have fared little better.⁴

Some of these confusions, resulting from oversimplistic treatment and a frequent failure to consider the societal context in which organisations exist, have been highlighted in the previous chapter which argued for a treatment of power as a homonymic term in which

the meaning is derived from the context and use (ie. derived through context, rather than contained solely in context). Questions such as, 'what is power?' -how can it be defined?' can in this approach, be replaced by questions concerned with, 'what does it mean to say that this is power in this situation?' The homonymic argument does not propose that we should 'contextualise' every term as we go along - that would be an impossible world, rather the argument is, that we should treat the fact that we do not do that, as problematic.

The neglect of societal context is moreover, compounded by the concurrent neglect of historical context, and I shall argue that the historical development of economies of scale arguments resulting in specialisation and the division of labour being seen as economically better ways of organising, and particularly in the ensuing complex relationships between ownership and management are crucial. As M. Sohn-Rethel has argued:-

'It has become clear beyond question that the hands which plot the paths of technology and the hands which operate it and which should benefit from it have undergone the most total schism.'

5

The schism has occurred as a fundamental component of the advancing capitalist society within which, for instance, Wenslow Manufacturing Co. exists, but the contextual location of this development has been lost or hidden as though it had no importance. As M. Sohn-Rethel has further argued:-

'.... it is precisely the abstractness and complexity with which the core of the schism is lodged in its historical roots that make us so blind to the overall pattern of perversion traced by technology today. The whole transaction as it were, has been completed behind our own and our ancestors backs.'

6

The first example of illustrative material from Wenslow Manufacturing Co., in approaching the assumptions inherent in the notion of the right to manage, demonstrates the schism.

The example concerns a meeting held to discuss the details of advertising four appointments which had recently been established in the Company. These appointments were for Section Managers each of which would be responsible to the Production Manager for a group of five or six foremen.

Present at the meeting were, Jim Phelps, the Production Manager, Len Jameson, the Production Director, Ernest Wainwright, a Recruitment Officer and myself. Since this meeting took place soon after my entry into the Organisation, my presence was justified as part of a familiarisation programme.

SCENARIO

Jim Phelps, the Production Manager, rose from his chair. 'Right, that's it then. Thanks Ernest. You'll let me have a draft advert. before releasing it for copy?'

'Yes ...' Ernest Wainwright, the Recruitment Officer, remained seated.

'Good. Right. That's it then.' Phelps began to shuffle the papers on his desk.

'Er ... what about communicating the vacancies internally?' Wainwright wrote something on his

pad, and then looked at Phelps.

'Yes... We've agreed,' said Phelps. We'll advertise on the Notice Boards at the same time as in the Press'. He sat down again and looked at Len Jameson, the Production Director, who remained reclining in his chair slowly sucking on an enormous pipe.

'Yes, but I mean.... What about the Unions?' Wainwright continued. 'I mean ... Aren't you going to inform the Unions?'

Phelps' brow furrowed. 'They'll see the notice on the Boards.' He waved an arm vaguely.

'Yes but'

'That's right They'll see the vacancies when they appear on the Notice Boards The same as everyone else.' The Production Director's voice came from behind the pipe.

'But in the interests of'

'It's got nothing to do with the Unions. This is our problem. Let's get on with it.' Phelps interjected angrily.

Wainwright looked towards me and smiled. He looked down at his pad again and wrote something. Len Jameson, the Production Director, rose from his chair, and the meeting closed in some confusion.

The inherent schism underlying the assumptions of Phelps and Jameson is illustrated both by the decision to appoint Section Managers, and in the handling of the process of making the appointments. The actual execution of the decision to appoint Section Managers had already been taken prior to the action concerned in this particular example, but the internalisation of, and commitment to, this decision by Phelps and Jameson is clear. Implicit in this internalisation is the notion that improving supervision (by 'the hands which plot the paths of technology') is directly related to improving production (by 'the hands which operate it') and the

oversimplification is clearly one of the problems produced by the schism. The handling of the process of making the appointments, further emphasises the problem and, illustrates the reproduction of the schism as a manifestation of certain rights.

The right to appoint Section Managers is clearly held to be the exclusive prerogative of Phelps and Jameson, but this right is also extended from a simple right to do (to 'plot') into a position where the 'hands which operate' do not even have a right to know what is being 'plotted'. The schism has thus produced a total transformation from a historical development of specialisation (This will be a better way of doing things - some plot - some operate) into a natural, inevitable division (This is the only way of doing things - some manage - some work), precisely because those who are the subject of the 'plotting' are held, by those doing the 'plotting', to have no rights to know what is being 'plotted'.

'There will be unconditional acceptance that Management have the right to manage and will do so in the best interests of all employees without discrimination.'

(Extract from a Company Notice
at Wenslow Manufacturing Co.)

The raising of the question of some kind of consultation with the unions (in the interests of 'good industrial relations' as Wainwright later elaborated to me) causes Phelps to get angry, presumably being read by him as a manifestation of the threat to his authority. This reading of the consequences of Wainwright's suggestion as a challenge to his right to manage is reinforced on two counts by the presence of his Functional Director. Firstly, he recognises that the Director,

Jameson, will take the line that consultation with the unions is not an issue (subsequently confirmed by Jameson's 'talk') and given the Managers' perception of the Directors undermining of Managers' authority he would wish to avoid giving Jameson an opportunity to direct him on this matter. Secondly, supporting this, and causing the anger when Jameson's confirmation comes, he needs to be seen to be able to 'run a tight ship' as a demonstration of his ability to manage irrespective of the issue. Ability to manage, when faced with the immediacy of the threat of authority being undermined by a Director, is generally equated with being totally in control. Thus the two sides of the coin are represented. Phelps' reading of the implications of Wainwright's suggestion as a threat to his right to manage from below is compounded by the immediate threat to his authority from above.

The taking for granted by some theorists of the right to manage and the assimilation of the right into the realm of 'what everyone knows' has been perpetuated not least because of the neglecting of considerations of the inherent assumptions in the way individuals go about accomplishing everyday life.⁷ An oversimplistic treatment of the relationship between power and right has led to the consideration of de facto dimensions for the notion of power (ie. concerned with the ability to exercise power) and de jure dimensions for the idea of right (ie. concerned with the legality of exercising power). Unfortunately, the treatment of right (as a legality) to exercise power (as an ability) is an analytical misnomer, and the difficulty stems from the substitution of the terms power and authority as though they were synonymically equivalent. The concurrent substitution of the term power with the idea of influence clearly demonstrates that

power cannot be synonymically exchanged with authority (unless legitimate is for instance, to be equated with influential!).

The idea of the legitimacy of authority is obviously central to any consideration of the right to manage, and clearly a return to a more basic homonymic question such as, 'what does it mean to say that someone has authority,' is indicated.

Hobbes is generally credited with introducing the concept of authority.

'.... and as the right of possession, is called dominion; so the right of doing any act; and done by authority, done by commission, or licence, from him whose right it is.'⁸

Hobbes conception of how, 'he whose right it is,' comes to possess such a commission or licence, is closely associated with his individualistic view of nature. His idea of the state of nature as the war of all against all suggests that the right is achieved by the ability of an individual to attain certain ends. Hobbes perspective thus suggests something of a utilitarian social theory based upon individual factors (human action lying in the 'passions') rather than the idea of a shared component in social structure.

Winch has criticised this position arguing that one cannot view right as developing from an individual ability perspective, because inevitably human communication and understanding necessitate the formation of and the following of rules.⁹ Thus the right to do anything must be derived from the development of a rule or rules which have been focused (socially derived and generally accepted)

in order to make possible the mundane process of communication (and understanding) in everyday life. Garfinkel has expressed this succinctly:

'... From the point of view of sociological theory the moral order consists of the rule-governed activities of everyday life. A society's members encounter and know the moral order as perceivedly normal courses of action - familiar scenes of everyday affairs, the world of daily life known in common with others and with others taken for granted.'¹⁰

A right to do anything is therefore encountered as a part of the moral order made up of rule-governed activities and the rule or rules concerning the right to manage are derived from the historical separation of intellectual and manual labour as a certain ('better') way of doing things (a specialisation based upon initial perceived economic advantages in the division of labour, subsequently involving a further partial separation of management from ownership, stemming from the pressures of supposed economies of scale). The irony of the situation, however, is that the rule is perpetuated by the self-fulfilling nature of the very rule manifestations which cause concern. The access to the particular historical circumstance from which the rule developed is blocked by a fear of the rule being destroyed. The concern with attacks upon managerial authority from below at Wenslow Manufacturing Co. prevents any consideration of the legitimacy of that authority, since any attempt to question its source is regarded as part of the attack. This is compounded by emotive media treatment which almost always refers (implicitly) to some vague representations of radical forces seeking to change the status-quo. The problem therefore remains uncovered, the access guarded against a vaguely

defined, but often symbolically identified as Marxist (or 'left-wing') enemy, and studies of power which develop theories based upon unexamined common-sense materials, thereby preclude an important perspective which, as suggested in the previous chapter, can contribute to explicating the submerged dimensions. As A. Sohn-Rethel has argued:

'...The reason why many essential questions of today cause such difficulties is that our thinking is not Marxist enough - it leaves important areas unexplored....'¹¹

The question of what it means to say that ones thinking is Marxist is of course problematic,¹² and this in itself gives fuel to the vague fear propounded. If one makes a reading of Marx which distinguishes between an explanatory theory and a liberation theory there would seem to be little problem in using Marxism as an explanatory theory. If, however, one makes a reading of Marx which aligns to Horkheimer's argument¹³ that the true object of Marxism is not the uncovering of immutable truths, but the fostering of social change, then one cannot make such a distinction between explanation and liberation. Any explanation on this count contains the seeds of liberation - or some inevitable element of social change, and therefore a more identifiable fear reinforces the need to prevent destruction of the rule of the right to manage.

One further element in the maintenance of the rule underlying the right to manage which enables attacks to be repulsed and potential redefinitions of the situation to be resisted, is the extent to which the rule (as known) is transformed into a duty (as taken for granted). This process as suggested in the previous chapter, is at the heart

of the problem of control in organisations. In the society in which Wenslow Manufacturing Co. exists, it is evident that those in control of organisations (whether termed managerial-elites, or dominant coalitions) seek to control their environments. The control of the environment is sought in order to achieve results (generally profits) and more particularly to achieve measurement of effectiveness (calculability).¹⁴ This is usually approached by introducing managerial control systems in some form, but unfortunately the complexity of organisational life (for example workers may institute their own controls)¹⁵ is at odds with this need for precise managerial control and attempts to improve calculability indeed so often lead to concerns with efficiency of control rather than efficiency of operation.

This striving for efficiency of control illustrates the way in which hierarchical organisation represents a certain structure of domination which enables the striving to be pursued, and in fact transforms the right into a sense of duty.

The second example from Wenslow Manufacturing Co. involves a meeting which was arranged by Graham Cooper, the Cost Office Manager. The meeting was called to discuss a Departmental problem which had been 'diagnosed' by the Director responsible as a problem of morale. The Director had given Graham Cooper two months in which to get this problem of morale in his Department 'sorted out'! Present at the meeting were the six Section Leaders who were directly responsible to the Manager, including Ted Jessop and Harry Johnson. My own presence was introduced as an 'adviser' from the Personnel Department.

Graham Cooper, the Cost Office Manager, sat back in his chair, and looked slowly round his group of Section Leaders.

'Well, you know the problem now. What do you think?'

There was a long silence. He again surveyed the Section Leaders, studying each one in turn. Finally he returned to Ted Jessop.

'Ted'.

'Graham'.

'What do you think?'

'You know what I think'.

'What'.

'Oh come on Graham. We've been over this so many times'. A further more tense silence was broken by Ted Jessop continuing in a more exasperated manner.

'You tell us what you think. You tell us what to do. You're the Manager. It's your job to tell us what to do'. Several of the Section Leaders shifted uneasily in their chairs.

'No - I don't agree. I think that we all have a responsibility to manage. You're all Section Leaders, therefore, you are part of the management team'. Cooper leaned forward supporting his head by means of his elbows pivoting on the edge of the desk. 'You all have a responsibility. You are all paid to manage by this Company, and as such you all have to make a contribution to this'.

There were several more, similar exchanges each becoming more heated, until the Manager suddenly turned to the rest of the group who had remained silent.

'Well what do you think?' Again, there was a long silence until Harry Johnson ventured a contribution.

'Well I agree with Ted really.' He looked down at his shoes. 'It is your job to tell us what to do'.

'What is your job then?' questioned the Manager

curtly.

'Well I can see your point as well. If you're saying, can you help I don't know what to do.'

'I'm not

'How can be say that.' Ted Jessop interjected.
'He's the bloody Manager, isn't he? He has to tell us what to do.'

'Well, I don't think it's as simple as that Ted.'
Harry Johnson nervously suggested.

'Christ Almighty, here we go again. I'm off for a piss.' Ted Jessop rose and left the meeting.

The representation of the right to manage as a duty is clearly evident in the assumptions inherent in Ted Jessop's speech in this example.

For Jessop, the Manager should tell them what to do, that is his job.

There are no questions about right to manage, the manager is in fact not doing his job (his duty)-if he does not tell them what to do.

Jessop's speech also provides an illuminating example of the way in which individuals use rules to manage (construct) their everyday lives.¹⁶

The transformation of the rule of the right to manage into a duty enables Jessop to justify his avoidance of making a contribution as a Section Leader to solving the problem (with an impossible - and irrelevant deadline) of improving morale in the Department. That is defined as Cooper's job.

For the Manager, Graham Cooper in this situation, the erosion/undermining of authority issue for him, as 'a Manager of Wenslow Manufacturing Co.', is encapsulated in his dilemma in this meeting. On the one hand he feels that his Director is eroding his authority and has obvious questions concerning the Director's action when he discovers that morale has not been 'sorted out!' Additionally, he

has Jessop taking a line quite similar to the Director's oversimplistic view of the nature of Management, which is suggesting that any undermining of authority (from below) is simply due to Cooper's own refusal/reluctance to exercise this duty. On the other hand, the other Section Leaders in the group clearly do not agree with Jessop, although they find it difficult to contribute because of Jessop's volubility; their own uncertainty about what to do in connection with the perceived problem of morale in the Department; and considerable doubts about whether they are undermining the Manager's authority in some way in an environment where that is such a big issue (perceived as such a big issue because of all the attention it receives whenever two are gathered together in corridors, canteens, car parks, etc. - and in any case the media 'tells them so!')

Graham Cooper's attempt to involve the Section Leaders in the managing of the Department (illustrating that not all Managers are as simplistic about the nature of management as was Phelps in the previous example) is jeopardised by the invoking of the paralysing effect of the rule (as a duty) of the right to manage. The Manager's problem is not simply one of, 'Is my authority being eroded/undermined?' but also a more immediate one of, 'How do I proceed with the awesome task of management (assuming that the task is not as simplistic as the Jessop's would have us believe) in an environment where it is widely held/believed that managerial authority is being eroded/undermined, and that such processes must be stopped?'

These continual social contradictions are at the heart of the way of life of the Managers of Wenslow Manufacturing Co. and the managing of the inter-relationship between the simplification process which

makes it possible to deal with the complexities of organisational life, and the construction of a world which gives some degree of reality to the erosion/undermining of authority, has to be achieved in the light (or dark!) of the naturalising (as absolutes) of historically derived rules (as choices) and against a background of emotive and confusing media invective.

'... The police formed a barrier between the pickets and the entrance to the works.

In charge was Chief Supt. Derek Broadbent, who said it was the police's responsibility to help the firm continue its business.

"We are taking no sides and we are only here as peace keepers," he said

(Wenslow Evening News
25th July 1978).

To take for granted the common sense assumptions of organisational members such as the Managers of Wenslow Manufacturing Co. without examining the nature and derivation of such assumptions, is clearly to invite theoretical inadequacy. The explication of such derivations must necessarily, however, approach the elucidation of the way of life as problematic. The contribution to knowledge is therefore, not a question of testing by some validation instrument or external process, but is internal and central to the content. In the case of power this points to the extent to which the revealing of the submerged (the power of the status-quo - eg. the symbolic manifestation of right as a duty of which everyone knows) reacts upon orientations to the observable (the exercising of power - eg. a decision made).

It has been suggested in this chapter that the notion of the right to manage is central to a consideration of the submerged aspects of power in organisations. The mechanisms which enable the right to be perpetuated and access to the derivation of the right prevented, will be examined in chapters seven, eight and nine. In the meantime in chapter six, the question of the transformation of the right into a duty will be further examined.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF MANAGEMENT¹

'..... a King symbolizes a whole society and must not be identified with any part of it. He must be in the society and yet stand outside it and this is only possible if his office is raised to a mystical plane.....'

(Evans-Pritchard)²

In societies such as the Shilluk of the Nilotic Sudan, Evans-Pritchard argues that the political organisation takes a ritual or symbolic form which gives way (although never entirely) to central administration. The Kingship is changeless and acknowledged as a supreme value by all the Shilluk, and the acceptance of regicide in one form or another as customary, cements this supremacy. In that permanence and in that acknowledgement the unity of the nation is manifested.³

Following the theme developed in the previous chapter of the idea of the right to manage being transformed into a duty, I shall suggest in this chapter that the sovereignty of management (which is not entirely divorced from divine monarchic origins) represents a manifestation of this transformation. Managers do not themselves refer to the sovereignty of management, and the term can therefore be considered a second order construct, in the context of this thesis, but the underlying assumptions are such as to construct relations which are suggestive of the administration of the Shilluk of the Nilotic Sudan as described by Evans-Pritchard.⁴

It is indeed evident that the symbolic elements in the sovereignty of management, provide one of the means by which domination acquires a symbolic permanence, thus enabling the structure of domination in society to be reproduced in organisations, and organisations to be conceived as means of perpetuating the structure of domination in society. The examples which follow come from Fielding and Company.

The characters involved are Mr. Wharton, the Design and Contracts Manager, and Armitage and Shaw, two Design Engineers. Mr. Wharton is 55 and has been with the Company 30 years. Armitage is 42, has been with the Company 5 years and is regarded as an unofficial Section Leader by other engineers. Shaw is 25 and has recently joined the Company. The action takes place in the Design and Administration Office, a shared office with 10 engineers and 15 people in Administration. Mr. Wharton has a private office which leads off the Design Section, access to which is by walking through the Administration Section. The equipment (drawing boards etc) in the office is archaic, and is often referred to by the design engineers, as Dickensian. My own presence was as a Design Engineer.

SCENARIO

'Armitage!' Mr. Wharton's voice boomed out across the main office. Armitage left his work and walked over to Mr. Wharton's office. He knocked and entered. After an interval of about ten minutes he emerged and made his way back to his drawing board. As he resumed his work Shaw addressed him.

'He'd better not talk to me like that.' He nodded his head towards Mr. Wharton's Office. 'I shall answer him in like manner.' He demonstrated, shouting in a low whisper, 'Yes Wharton!'

I hope I'm here when you do that. Armitage
answered without raising his eyes.

The symbolic elements of the sovereignty of management will then be approached by examining the way in which members present rational accounts of their organised activities, and particularly in the way in which a stranger (Shaw) struggles to account for the activities he witnesses, in relation to his existing stock of knowledge of competent membership. As J. Douglas has argued:

'... such "rational accountings" inevitably make use of indexical or reflexive ties between those accounts and the shared (organised) practical activities of the members involved in the communication to show that the accounts are in fact "rational".'

5

The interpretation of these rational accounts will be undertaken on the assumption that each actor has a past and a future, which may be just as important to his orientations, as is the present.

By examining Shaw's rational account of the activity in the example, the way in which the truism perspective of the sovereignty of management arises, can be illustrated. The summoning of Armitage by the use of his surname, and by shouting this across the office results in Shaw indicating to Armitage that he finds this in some way unacceptable. As a relative newcomer to the Organisation, his response indicates some unease with these aspects of his socialisation, which suggests that his meaning configurations contain significantly different elements derived from the ordering of his past experience.⁶ Faced with the problem of producing a rational account of the activity, Shaw's response can be seen as a kind of 'indexical bridge'. By

saying, 'He wouldn't talk to me like that', he is able to tie the something-different elements of his past experience to the new situation into which he is being socialised. In making this response, Shaw directs his attention to Mr. Wharton, personalising the issue and giving Mr. Wharton total responsibility for the activity. This individual level interpretation, in what is an unusual situation for Shaw, is an example of the way in which manifestations of the sovereignty of management result in rational accounts being reproduced as interpersonal factors. The truism perspective is generated from the apparent inevitability of this reproduction, in which there seems to be a tacit recognition of the rights associated with the sovereignty, resulting in such rights being reproduced as a duty.

As Sykes has suggested:

'Now power based on authority is actually a complex social relationship in which an individual or a group of individuals is recognised as possessing a right to issue commands or regulations and those who receive these commands or regulations feel compelled to obey by a sense of duty.'⁷

The preponderance of such individual level interpretations, given the tendency to treat everyday life as a 'resource', has undoubtedly contributed to conceptualisation by theorists being focused at this level, resulting in a tendency to theoretical psychologism.⁸ This is not to condemn such an analysis totally, merely to argue that it is only one level. As Levi-Strauss argues, in another context.

'...They are allied to other beliefs and practices, directly or indirectly linked to classificatory schemes which allow the natural and social universe to be grasped as an organised whole. The only distinctions which could be introduced between all these schemes derive from preference, which are never exclusive, for this or that level of classification.'

9

The tacit recognition of the rights of sovereignty referred to above is made more apparent by examining Shaw's continuing response. His suggestion that he would reply to Mr. Wharton in like manner, followed by his exaggerated example, suggests that he theorises that Armitage will know that he is unlikely to carry out any such threat. This theorising about what is known in a situation can be seen as part of the establishing of indexicality in relation to the changed environment of Shaw's. He is in a sense testing his logic in his new location. As Bourdieu has indicated:

'One thus has to acknowledge that practice has a logic which is not that of logic, if one is to avoid asking of it more logic than it can give...'

10

In other words, in testing out this theory of what is known, Shaw makes a logical estimate of the shared assumptions between himself and Armitage. M. Douglas has illustrated the nature of these shared assumptions.

'Each theory has its hidden implications. These are its unspoken assumptions about the nature of ultimate reality. They are unspoken because they are taken for granted. There is no need to make them explicit because this is the common basis of experience. Such shared assumptions underlie any discourse, even the elaborated speech code which is developed to inspect them. They are the foundations on which social reality is constituted....'

11

That the symbolic elements in the sovereignty influence the giving of meaning to the situation by Shaw is evidenced by this logic testing process. Shaw's assumption that Armitage will know that Shaw is unlikely to carry out his threat is then seen as an attempt to establish the common basis of experience and degree of shared knowledge, in relation to the sovereignty. These symbolic elements are in the very bedrock of activity as suggested by Bourdieu.

'Symbolic systems owe their practical coherence, that is their regularities, and also their irregularities and even incoherences (both equally necessary because inscribed in the logic of their genesis and functioning) to the fact that they are the product of practices which cannot perform their practical functions except insofar as they bring into play, in their practical state, principles which are not only coherent - ie. capable of engendering intrinsically coherent practices compatible with objective conditions - but also practical, in the sense of convenient, ie. immediately mastered and manageable because obeying a "poor" and economical logic.'

12

The cryptic nature of Armitage's reply confirms the recognition of the sovereignty by implying that there will be some fireworks to look forward to if Mr. Wharton is challenged by Shaw. In addition, Armitage seems to make the assumption that Shaw will not really carry out his threat, which can be seen as an example of the symbolic elements of the sovereignty influencing the rational account given by Armitage evidenced by the underlying message in Armitage's reply, 'I know that you know that you will not.....'

SCENARIO

'There's no way we can get a supply to that building without a second sub-station somewhere in this area.' Armitage pointed to the drawing.

His voice had a sense of finality. Several engineers were gathered around his drawing board, and Mr. Wharton was standing in the middle of the office listening to the conversation.

'There's only one sub-station allowed for in the estimates.' Mr. Wharton's shoulders jerked and his neck rotated stiffly. There was silence for a moment and then Armitage began checking his figures. Mr. Wharton remained in the centre of the room. After some time Armitage again said,

'It won't work without a sub-station by the Admin. Block.' Mr. Wharton, his voice moving up an octave re-stated,

'There is only one sub-station in the estimate, if you want one there, you'll have to move the main sub-station.'

'We can't do that, the main sub-station must be sited in the Machine Shop where the heaviest load centre is.' Armitage was firm. The exchange continued, becoming more rapid, Armitage remaining cool, but Mr. Wharton becoming more and more agitated. After several repetitive exchanges, Mr. Wharton stamped his foot petulantly and screamed,

'It's all very well for you to say that we need two sub-stations when only one has been allowed for, you don't have to go down to the front office and face that old bugger.'

This further example of personalising but at a different hierarchical level underlines the incompleteness of an individual level analysis. Faced with this, many organisational studies¹³ have taken a structural or systems approach to the problem, and this has compounded the truism perspective. An, 'I look up to him, but I look down on him' approach is not much more than an inane, 'a hierarchy, is a hierarchy, is a hierarchy' conceptualisation, yet this must underlie any formulation built upon for instance exchange theory.

The way in which the similarities between Shaw's and Mr. Wharton's

orientations come to be emphasised is in itself an illustration of the symbolic nature of the sovereignty of management, the ideal of infallible authority (the Kingship) being fundamental to the hierarchy mystique enables the personalising (the attributing of total responsibility to one individual - the King) to take place without totally undermining the very fabric of superior/subordinate relationships. This hierarchy mystique, whether viewed as the result of deliberate clouding by higher levels in the hierarchy, or whether a more deterministic position is adopted, is perpetuated by the neglect of analysts to consider societal factors. Wassenburg has indeed put this succinctly.

'Organisation theory has gradually lost its analytical capacity and interest in the impact of societal forces on the functioning of all kinds of formal organisations. As a consequence, the impoverished branch of general sociology that is called organisation theory finds itself unable to explain the macro-consequences of the behaviour of that multitude of organisations that comprises a society which is more or less consciously bound in institutional frameworks.'

14

Wassenburg argues for the infusion of insights and ambitions from economic and political sociology, but even an infusion of more insightful treatment of common sense assumptions of organisation members would be a step forward.

SCENARIO

Mr. Wharton came out of his office and strode down the main office, shoulders jerking and neck rotating vigorously. As he reached the door to the staircase he exclaimed in a loud voice,

'Always ride towards the sound of the guns!'
He turned to acknowledge the applause.....

There are two main symbolic factors which stem from this example, and although they are manifestly separate they are derivatively related. As M. Douglas has argued:

'A symbol only has meaning from its relation to other symbols in a pattern. The pattern gives the meaning.'¹⁵

The first symbolic factor is to be found in the actual words, 'Always ride towards the sound of the guns', and the British Raj image gives the pattern to which this can be related (not least from the historical remanticism associated with the use of the word ride). Mr. Wharton's distinguished military career (reputedly awarded MBE for wartime services) indicates the influence of British Military tradition. The widely held view of the supremacy of the British full frontal attack is illustrated by Mr. Wharton's 'over the top' speech as he prepares to, 'go down to the front office and face that old bugger'.

The second symbolic factor has two elements. The actual performance (which was afterwards described as a brilliant piece of stagemanship) is representative of the archetypal Hollywood hero, and secondly the effect of the content is to underline this Hollywood hero aspect by suggesting to the design engineers that everything is under control. A generation of Hollywood bombardment has produced the image of a hero who always wins, always gets his man, is always totally in control, and is totally responsible for himself. (Trust in me and all will

be well - The American Dream is alive and well, and even reinforced by its own apparent rejection with the counterposing of the anti-hero as hero).

This concentration upon the star and the associated glamourisation clearly subsumes the underlying representation of sovereignty and contributes to perpetuation (since it is unexamined, and/or avoids consciousness) of the existing order (notwithstanding some degree of emergence and/or negotiation) and structure of domination. As Adorno has illustrated.

'Within the context of its social effect, the particular ideological doctrine which a film imparts to its audience is presumably far less important than the interest of the homeward bound movie-goer in the names and marital affairs of the stars.'¹⁶

Thus the notion of the sovereignty of management has significant symbolic elements which are related to the structure of domination in society, and the manifestations of these symbolic elements contribute to the perpetuation of the structure of domination.

'How is it that we can stay in business though, when things are so bad?.....Why do people keep coming back for more?....I suppose someone must be pulling strings at higher levels.'

(Engineer at Fielding & Co.)

In the way that control, and those in control, remained elusive to K (in Kafka's, *The Castle*¹⁷) so the structure of domination remains elusive to the employees of Fielding and Company. The avoiding of consciousness (of the structure of domination) enables perpetuation

of the sovereignty of management (the Kingship). Issues are personalised into the Manager (the King) who is 'only human' (and can be sacrificed).

'Yes the old bugger might not have given much money or power to any of the staff, but he obviously gave too much to his sons They've kicked him out well kicked him upstairs anyway.....'.

(Engineer at Fielding and Co.)

In a review of the ways in which the term sovereignty has been used,
¹⁸
Benn has argued for an abandonment of the word (shades of Dahrendorf on power) rather than an all-embracing type definition, since so protean a word produces more confusions than clarifications if attempts are made to produce such generalised spans of meaning. Clearly this is again to suggest a homonymic approach, and since the idea of the sovereignty of management developed in this chapter is a second order construct, in that members do not normally (yet) use such a construct, it will be propitious to examine further some of the manifestations of this sovereignty.

The symbolic manifestations of the sovereignty of management suggest an all-powerful all-embracing element over which members have no control and very little means of influence (in terms of actually being able to change the status-quo, that is). At North Midlands Board for instance I was struck with the way in which members used the term 'The Board' as though representing a Dark Lord in the Land of Mordor controlling destinies. Some experiences however must have been such as to confirm a conception of this nature as something near a reality. On one occasion I asked a group of engineers if they could describe how in fact they pictured the idea represented by, 'The Board'.

Although one engineer (who had recently moved to North Midlands Board having previously worked for two other Area Boards) said that he visualised a map with the area of North Midlands Board coloured blue, a number did respond with an image suggesting a certain tacit acceptance of powerlessness and a feeling of total domination. One engineer said that he pictured an oppressive black cloud hanging over a road which was his life's journey. I related this to what I already knew of his past experience in which during a previous reorganisation he had not only had to move his place of residence, but had also had to change the nature of his job, abandoning his lifetime's training.

This reification of the organisation enables the sovereignty of management to survive as a symbol of domination by a depersonalisation of individuals (ie. no responsibility is attributed to an individual manager - 'We all have our jobs to do') and a concurrent personalisation of 'things' (the organisation as inevitable form - 'It's just the system').

'In accordance with the Contracts of Employment Act 1972 (as amended), we hereby give due notice of a change in terms and conditions of employment in that effective Monday, 2nd May 1977, any employee shall, upon request, submit to being searched (ie. belongings and vehicles), by officials authorised by the Company to carry out such searches. At the request of the person to be searched, an independent witness may be present.'

(Extract from a Company
Notice at Wenslow Manufacturing
Co.)

The idea of the inevitability, and paradoxically the reified infallibility, of 'the Organisation' - a kind of 'the Organisation

knows no wrong' - is ingrained in the way of life so that at North Midlands Board for instance, a symbol of domination is also used by members to provide shelter from the stormy tasks to be undertaken in such a nationalised concern (favourite 'whipping boys' of the media). The giving of bad news to consumers, such as informing a new connection that a contribution will be required towards the cost of providing a supply, will commence with the words, 'The Board have Statutory Rights to demand a capital contribution....', hardly a normal way to start a letter to a prospective customer. The monopoly position however does allow some of the symbols of domination to be passed on. Life is not all negatives.

This kind of operation is undoubtedly one of the contributing factors to the accepted laymans view of bureaucracy as being representative of giant inefficiency, inhuman and wasteful, quite unrelated to Weberian theoretical notions of bureaucracy. The despair that recipients of the 'oppressiveness' often express, confirms this image of bureaucracy as one of dysfunction. The image does however enable protection of the sovereignty of management, since even though 'victims' experiences do, on occasions, cause them to castigate individual managers in the organisation and propound individual level prescriptions ('If only they'd get rid of him'. 'Hmm. He got out of bed the wrong side this morning....') in the last resort it is 'the system' which is to blame, and of course that cannot be changed. There is also a sense in which 'the system' is felt to be unmanageable, and therefore individual managers are to be excused inefficiency.

'Like I've always said, I'll fight them until
I'm 45, then I'll join them.'

(Engineer at North Midlands Board)

Something of this despair was in evidence when I was approached by an employee of Penborough Corporation. This particular employee thrust a wad of correspondence into my hand and said, 'Here, you're an expert on organisation, how do you explain this then.' The employee considered that she had been victim of 'the bureaucracy', and of people in management simply, 'toeing the party line', and not really listening to her 'obviously genuine' grievance. The subject of the grievance was the treatment of four days in which the employee (Mrs. Page) had been absent from work. The four days in question were very near the end of the financial year and were days which Mrs. Page had arranged to have as holiday. Unfortunately, Mrs. Page was in fact sick during these four days, but duly submitted a doctor's note in accordance with organisational procedure. On return to work in the first few days of the new financial year, Mrs. Page was informed that she could not carry forward into the new year, the four days holiday on which she had been sick, because the carrying forward of holidays into another year was against 'Corporation Policy'. Mrs. Page accepted this as reasonable, but was surprised to learn that her pay for the four days had been reduced to the level of that due had she been absent sick (married females having the choice of paying full or reduced NHI contributions not affecting whether or not normal pay is reduced during a period of sickness - a normal organisational practice). In fact Mrs. Page had elected to pay reduced contributions and fully accepted that she would lose pay during any period of sickness. However during the four days in question Mrs. Page maintained that because she was not allowed to change her holidays she was, for organisational purposes, on holiday even though she had submitted a sick note. She accepted that it was her misfortune to be sick whilst on holiday, but maintained that since 'the organisation' was in effect

defining that period as being-on-holiday, they could hardly also claim that she should have her pay reduced for being sick whilst being on holiday!

Mrs. Page pursued her claim over several months and the following memorandum written by the Administration Manager to the Shop Steward representing Mrs. Page, was typical of the response met.

DOCUMENT

I am sorry that I have not been able to reply earlier to your memo of the 7th June, 1978 on the above mentioned subject but it has been necessary for me to consult the Chief Personnel Officer.

I am unable to agree to the suggestions you are making in sub-paragraph 1 in the penultimate paragraph of your letter as it would be clearly contrary to the purple book conditions relating to sickness pay. Paragraph 50 of the conditions makes it clear that married women exercising the right to be excepted from the payment of the full rate of national insurance contributions shall be deemed, in regard to the scheme for sickness payments, to be insured in their own right and in their case deductions will be made from the full pay of an amount equal to the benefit that would have been received if full national insurance contributions had been paid.

As regards paragraph 2, the Chief Personnel Officer has informed me that it is not the Corporation's policy to permit leave which has been frustrated because of sickness to be carried forward to a following leave year. This policy probably stems from the conditions of service relating to manual workers which provides that when an employee is absent because of illness there is no entitlement to annual holiday until return to work and that each year shall stand by itself and leave shall not be carried over from one year to another.

There would, of course, be little point in my meeting you to discuss the matter as I have, naturally, no authority to vary what is accepted as standard Council practice.

Mrs. Page and her Shop Steward spent some considerable time trying to clarify the substance of the claim, which they felt was being deliberately diverted into an issue which they did not dispute. Typical of their submissions was the following memorandum sent from the Shop Steward to the Administration Manager.

DOCUMENT

Further to your memo of 3rd July, 1978, I was surprised that you appear to have misunderstood the point made in my memo of 7th June.

The issue seems to me quite clear:-

1. You would not permit Mrs. Page to carry forward her holidays (due to the Council's policy).
2. Therefore Mrs. Page was on holiday as pre-arranged from 21st March, 1978 to 24th March, 1978 inclusive and should not have pay reduced for this period (the fact that she was off sick during this holiday is her misfortune).
3. You cannot conceivably argue that this misfortune should be compounded by having her pay reduced for a period during which she was on holiday (which you would not allow her to carry forward).
4. The argument presented in the second paragraph of your memo - as I understand it - is not in dispute. The request being made is for a payment of full salary to be made for the four days during which Mrs. Page was on holiday, by your 'definition', not off sick.

The dispute therefore is one of the definition of Mrs. Page's absence on the four days in question. Your enforcement of the Council's holiday rules (which are accepted) necessarily defines that absence as four days holiday. There is no question of a request being made for 'sick pay' for any part of the absence period 8th March, 1978 to 24th April, 1978, which would be quite ridiculous since Mrs. Page has opted to pay 'reduced contributions'. It is interesting to reflect however that for an employee who is paying 'full contributions' it is a legal offence to claim 'state sickness benefit' for a period during which the employee is on

holiday. If therefore you applied the same 'definition of absence' criteria to such an employee you would place that employee in a position where she had to claim sickness benefit for a period of holiday, and hence break the law, in order to 'maintain full salary'. You would not, of course, argue that the definition of absence is in any way determined by whether or not an employee pays full or reduced contributions!

I am sure this makes Mrs. Page's position quite clear, and I look forward to receiving your confirmation that her salary will not be reduced for the four days of holiday entitlement referred to.

The following reply was received to this attempted clarification.

DOCUMENT

I refer to your further memorandum of the 13th September 1978 on the above-mentioned matter.

I note the arguments which you put forward which I do not accept. However, there is little point in my prolonging this correspondence because, as I mentioned in my earlier memorandum, my decision was dictated by general Council policy.

I would suggest, therefore, that if you wish to pursue this matter further you do so through your Branch with the Chief Personnel Officer, to whom I have sent a copy of the correspondence.

The despair felt by Mrs. Page (she finally accepted the decision to reduce her pay) stemmed from her feeling that 'the organisation' could continue indefinitely to avoid facing the real issue, and divert into an issue that could be defended even though it was not in contention. This underlines the image of invincibility, the ability to enforce preferred definitions of situations, and reinforces the sense of the absolute. The kingship is supreme.

This chapter has examined the notion of the sovereignty of management and suggested that this represents a transfer of the right to manage into a duty to manage, thereby constituting an important element of the symbolic nature of manifestations of power. The means by which such notions as the right to manage and the sovereignty of management are reconstructed and recapitulated thus enabling perpetuation, is even more central to the idea of the symbol-rich nature of organisational life constituting manifestations of power, and the following three chapters will therefore be devoted to an examination of these means.

ESTABLISHING 'BLISSFUL CLARITY'¹

When Vladimir says to Estragon (in 'waiting for Godot') '.... But at this place, at this moment of time, all mankind is us, whether we like it or not ...',² he encapsulates the problem of non-omnipotent being. Persons do not have the facility for omniscience, and therefore, since it is not possible to address total reality at any point in time - taking the assumption that there exists some form of an 'out there' world - a process of abstraction and simplification is necessary.³

The process of abstraction and simplification enables a world to be constructed and given meaning, but in a way which tends to result in a viewing of the construction as the only possible world. The whole transaction has a tendency to become self-fulfilling. The views of the world produced by the abstraction and simplification process in fact achieve the continuing confirmation required to perpetuate their existence, by the transformation of the possible into the absolute. This defining as absolute thereby works to prevent (although never totally achieves) access to alternative possible views. The particular is made general and becomes accepted to the extent that the access to the totality of the larger world, in the shape of possible alternative views, is blocked. Perspectives become ossified.

Berlin has argued that in order to prevent ossification (of which the results of such an abstraction and simplification process are one example) societies need philosophers in addition to men of action,

because whilst men of action cannot be called upon to constantly examine themselves, otherwise nothing would get done, nevertheless, someone does have to examine these things.⁴ If the examination is not undertaken, beliefs turn into dogma, imagination is warped, and the intellect becomes sterile.

This chapter examines the extent to which such an abstraction, simplification and ossification process is represented by the process of legitimation of the right to manage, and the sovereignty of management.

The means by which everyday life is made possible is an elusive but central problem for any social analysis, and the way in which each ticking second recedes into history leaving an element, a part of its presence, its life, is at the heart of this problem. The structure of the, 'what everyone knows' element in everyday life is largely determined by the abstraction and simplification process (and, by the way in which this process is manipulated) acting as a kind of selection filter in the development of assumptions and understandings. The continual reinforcement of everyday transactions ensures perpetuation of selections.

Consider a transaction in which A gives B one penny in payment for something received (in the form of goods or services). At $t = -1$ second, A prepares to give B one penny, because that is the done thing in this situation. B has given A something, A knows that he must pay for that, money is legal tender, one penny is the going rate. At $t = \text{zero}$, A gives B one penny. At $t = +1$ second, A has given B one penny, one penny is confirmed as the going rate, money is confirmed

as legal tender. The payment for something is confirmed.

The assumptions concerning, going rates, legal tender etc., and the regarding of the whole process as the done thing, are necessary to the extent that they simplify the task of exchange. The legitimisation of the transaction is used and confirmed by A and B as a language of exchange which enables concentration to be diverted to other more important things - such as the state of the weather!

The elevation of other things to the position of more important, thus necessitates the simplification process in which shared assumptions and understandings can be developed to make easy the structuring of everyday life. The development of shared assumptions and understandings is subject to continual reformulation in members interactions, but the reformulation itself becomes second nature (thus transforming a possible way of exchange into an absolute) in that members are not (normally) aware of the essence of what they are reformulating. They do not consciously reformulate alternatives - A does not (usually) consider whether to give B a turnip rather than a penny. The simplification thus produces a better (more convenient in terms of time and energy expenditure) world, but this derivation located in history (as such transactions take place and become more convenient) is lost, as the possible means of executing exchanges becomes the way.

This loss of historical derivation may not be too serious in the case of monetary exchange (in fact because the increase in convenience is so obvious perhaps it is never entirely lost) however, in more complex considerations the loss can have severe consequences.

To illuminate some of the more serious consequences it would be helpful to address the question of the kind of loss represented by a loss of historical derivation. In that the loss is based in individual consciousness it stems from the very (necessary) abstraction and simplification processes which result in the transformation of a possible into the absolute. However, this chapter is concerned with the extent to which the loss becomes shared, and the extent to which the shared existence is experienced as a rule, as a belief in a rule, and as an incorrigible manifestation of the done thing as the only rule possible. The focus is thus upon the extent to which it represents a myth - in the sense of being a message - as a system of communication (the extent to which it tells a story) as a kind of speech - a message purveyor.

Barthes in fact has argued that myth has the task of giving an historical intention a natural justification and making contingency appear eternal.

'In passing from history to nature, myth acts economically: it abolishes the complexity of human acts, it gives them the simplicity of essences, it does away with all dialectics, with any going back beyond what is immediately visible, it organises a world which is without contradictions because it is without depth, a world wide open and wallowing in the evident, it establishes a blissful clarity: things appear to mean something by themselves.'

5

The abstraction and simplification process, so necessary to make possible the problematic of accomplishing everyday life, thus achieves its (often) unfortunate self fulfilling properties to the extent that it creates myth. The isolation of nature (the present - the absolute)

from history (the ticking seconds containing the possibles - the alternatives) is made innocent by the depoliticised speech of myth. As Barthes has suggested.

'.... myth is constituted by the loss of the historical quality of things: in it, things lose the memory that they once were made.'⁶

Thus the underlying political relations are divested in producing 'blissful clarity', and the essence of the depoliticising lies in the message purveyed. The myth therefore operates in the realms of the submerged (ie. as distinct from an overt story-telling kind of myth).

The following illustrative material underlines this depoliticising (as a loss of memory) by demonstrating the way in which the depoliticised speech of myth is subsumed in the 'normal speech' of everyday life. The material comes from Wenslow Manufacturing Co., and concerns a lunchtime conversation between John Manners, the Machine Shop Manager, and Roger Metcalfe, the Training Manager. The writer was seated at the next table.

SCENARIO

'You know Roger, I think the biggest problem facing us at the moment is the question of morale.' John Manners, the Machine Shop Manager helped himself to more potatoes.

'Why do you say that?' Roger Metcalfe asked rather sharply indicating something of his concern (as Training Manager) with the prevalent pre-occupation of fellow managers, with identifying solutions where he felt, they didn't even know how to diagnose problems.

'Well you know, I can go round the shop and ... well just ... its almost as though people's faces told me'.

'Told you what?'

'Told me that people are not ... I don't know
.... I know it's not fashionable to talk
about ... about being happy ... about being
happy contented satisfied at work.
But there's certainly ... something wrong ...
... somewhere.' Manners voice trailed away.

'Why don't you ask them then?' Roger Metcalfe
suggested.

'Ask them what? ...' Manners laughed.

'Ask them what is wrong.'

'Well, I can hardly do that can I. They wouldn't
be likely to tell me would they?'

'It depends what you want them to tell you.'
Metcalfe warmed to his argument. 'In my
experience people are only too pleased to talk
about themselves. They're so unused to anyone
taking an interest in them.'

Manners became more agitated, 'But its not a
matter of being interested in them
of course I am that goes without
saying that's why I want to know what
to do about morale ... It's my job to manage,
and I must do something. How can I motivate
them?

I shall, for the purposes of this discussion, concentrate upon the
inherent assumptions in the normal speech of John Manners, the Machine
Shop Manager.

The account of his problem as being a problem of morale suggests that
his concern is grounded in the view that the workers in the Machine
Shop are in some way dissatisfied with things, and that this is an
undesirable situation. When asked to explain why he feels that this
is a problem of morale he has some difficulty, but opts to talk in
terms of happiness, contentment and satisfaction at work. His normal
speech is thus concerned with identifying a cause (low morale) for

some perceived symptoms (unhappiness).

The search for a cause is underlain by two key assumptions. Firstly, the observation that people's faces indicate that they are not happy/contented/satisfied suggests that Manners feels that they ought to feel happy/contented/satisfied. The view that they do not is evidence that something is wrong. Manners' view seems to suggest some degree of an implicit benevolent, altruistic social theory in which work is good and to be enjoyed irrespective of the manner in which it is organised. Any unpleasant tasks can be accommodated in this scheme, because the overriding nature of work is towards increasing production, which is self evidently 'good'.

The possibility of non-commitment to this kind of social theory is depoliticised by implicitly defining as deviant anyone not subscribing to the (abstracted) idea of increasing production. The second key assumption underlying Manners' normal speech concerns the fundamental structure of relationships at work. The inherent premise here stems from this abstraction, that in order to achieve the processes of production a separation is required between those who manage and those who work.⁷ As suggested in chapter five, this separation is located in the acceptance of specialisation following from perceived economic advantages in the division of labour (the particular historical circumstances) and the gradual distinction (albeit partial) developed between management and ownership due to the forces of economies of scale. The particular historical circumstances are depoliticised by transforming the resultant separation of some manage - some work into an absolute.

'The Company, having carefully reviewed the total situation, now regards those employees involved in the dispute as being in repudiation of their Contract of Employment and accordingly will be notifying each of the employees involved that unless they resume normal working by Monday, 23rd May 1977, they will be treated as having repudiated and terminated their Contract of Employment as from that date.'

(Extract from a Company Notice
at Wenslow Manufacturing Co.)

That is the way things are - that is the only way things could be - everyone knows; and access to the derivation is blocked by defining any attempt to gain access as subversive. The symbolic permanence is given life in the inevitability.

Two examples will illustrate this blocking, and thereby the perpetuation of the absolute. The attempt to question the supposed advantages of the economies of scale - symbolised by the slogan, 'small is beautiful' - has resulted in proponents of decentralisation and reduction of operating size being defined as idealistic (- a nice idea, but really!). Defining as idealistic necessarily means impractical and therefore deviant in a situation where increasing size is the very foundation of the structure of the separation of work relationships into managing and working. A further demonstration of the blocking can be seen in the defining as subversive, arguments which seek to conceptualise the specialisation/division of labour development (perceived as economically advantageous) as resulting in exploitation of the surplus value of the labour of some, by others (as an inevitable consequence of advancing from a commodity exchange into a monetary exchange economy).

Manners thus in the face of these transforming forces, sees the

problem as one of morale, existing and requiring a resolution within the inherent (depoliticised as absolute) structure. The myth (of absolute structure) pushes Manners into manipulating the pieces on the Board, because the rules of the game are given.

Metcalf's suggestion that Manners should talk to the people, and ask them what is wrong, is dismissed as not taking the matter really seriously, since 'if the Manager does not know, how can they know?' (given the definition of the problem as a technical one of morale).

'Workers on strike at Wenslow Manufacturing Co. say they have become mere numbers on a computer. No longer does the boss come down on to the shop floor and talk to them about the little things in life which may be worrying them, they claim.'

(Wenslow Evening News, 11.5.78)

Thus Manners' view portrays the hierarchical structure as a hierarchy of knowledge/expertise and suggests that since morale is such a complex problem, it needs a manager (as expert) to understand it. This compounds the problem, because whilst it is a reasonable assumption that someone specialising will develop some expertise, the process of becoming absolute clouds the reality that becoming specialist does not equate with becoming absolute specialist nor exclude others from becoming knowledgeable as non-specialist. Manners thus forecloses any alternative views of the situation.

The location of the problem in this way, leads to the acceptance of total responsibility for the situation by Manners. As a manager it is seen as his problem. In his scheme, he has to solve it. He needs

to know how to motivate them. That is the answer. Motivation will 'cure' morale.

The basic underlying assumption then is concerned with the control of workers by management, but the emotive, negative connotations associated with controlling someone are avoided by the less emotive term of motivating (to motivate someone is a 'good' thing to do). The describing of controlling as motivating makes the depoliticising of control (based on the particular historical derivations resulting in a separation of managing and working) more naturalistic (acceptable as an absolute). The belief in the rule (of the right to control) as an establishment of 'blissful clarity' is thus firmly entrenched in the bedrock of society. As depoliticised speech it tells a (covert) story. It is a myth, but a part of the very necessary abstraction and simplification process which enables the complex to be made simple. In creating simplicity, however, the myth (inevitably?) disguises factors which philosophers (organisation theorists?) need to examine if ossification is to be avoided in situations typified by the example of Manners' problem.

Theorists who have examined such ossifications (albeit from a different conceptualisation than the depoliticised speech of myth) have tended to base their arguments upon re-interpretations of Marx⁸ and Weber⁹, and clearly such critical/interpretive schemas are relevant here. Whether following Marx' idea that capitalist production (as an exploitation of the surplus labour of some by others) represents the domination of one class by another, or Weber's idea that in bureaucratic organisation there is a need to control (in order to calculate - in order to measure success - profitability) therefore those

in control represent the domination of some by others, the results are similar. They are similar in that, those in control (whether conceptualised as, a class, managerial elites, or a dominant coalition) have the means of influencing the abstraction/simplification processes (eg. Manners' foreclosing of alternative views of the situation) thereby perpetuating the domination and contributing to symbolic permanence. The transformation process is, therefore, as might be expected, not simply a deterministic phenomena, and it is possible to conceive of organisations as being one means of perpetuating societal structures of domination (through the influence of those in control.)¹⁰

'So he resumed his walk, but the way proved long. For the street he was in, the main street of the village, did not lead up to the Castle hill, it only made towards it and then, as if deliberately, turned aside, and though it did not lead away from the Castle it got no nearer to it either. At every turn K expected the road to double back to the Castle, and only because of this expectation did he go on

(Franz Kafka, The Castle)

Thus the originally perceived economically advantageous division of labour has been transformed into an absolute, and is maintained as an absolute by the very structure of domination produced, whereby certain members have more control over the transformation process and the blocking of access to derivations.¹¹ The idea of some having control over others suggests an acceptance of the principle of control as a fundamental component of organisational life, and this acceptance is clearly grounded in a belief that it is the done thing, and a part of what everyone knows. In fact, as suggested in chapter four, Weber's categorisation of authority into different types (legal-rational, traditional, and charismatic) in addressing the question of what it

means to say that someone has authority conceptualises that meaning in terms of a belief.

In Weber's schema legitimacy may be 'bestowed' in different ways associated with the different types of authority, but the legitimacy is founded on some kind of belief. Thus, legal-rational authority:

'... rests on a belief in the "legality" of patterns ...'¹²

and traditional authority is seen as:

'... resting on an established belief in the sanctity of'¹³

The kind of belief which sustains such an acceptance is not an elaborate messianic entity involving fulfilled expectations, rather it is a belief which is continually and simply satisfied in 'the way things are', that fulfils belief (acceptance) precisely because things could not be otherwise. It is a belief which is given credence, as suggested in chapter five, in the rule system of everyday life.¹⁴

'But a glazier in the factory believes that the position has now reached a stalemate and she believes the management will never give in. But equally significantly she refused to have her name published, an indication of the feelings of worry and fear which are not so very far away from the surface.'

(Wenslow Evening News, 11.5.78)

The acceptance of 'the principle of control' is thus absolute (absolute in effect that is, since an argument such as this would not

be possible if such ossifications were totally absolute) and represents a myth to the extent that it is merely a particular historical derivation of doing organising. The familiar in organisational life is reproduced and sustained by the belief in the familiar as the only thing possible. Bourdieu has in fact argued that the 'realised myth' (realised in the sense of being achieved rather than being aware of) reproduces the reconciliation of subjective demand and objective necessity which appears as the grounding of the belief of a whole group in what the group believes.

'Every established order tends to produce (to very different degrees and with very different means) the naturalisation of its own arbitrariness. Of all the mechanisms tending to produce this effect, the most important and the best concealed is undoubtedly the dialectic of the objective chances and the agent's aspirations, out of which arises the sense of limits, commonly called the sense of reality, ie. the correspondence between the objective classes and the internalised classes, social structures and mental structures, which is the basis of the most ineradicable adherence to the established order!' 15

This 'sense of limits' as a 'sense of reality' appears as a rule or rule system, and is founded in the myth or myths which are made possible by the indiscriminating belief in rules. Thus the structure of domination can be seen to be actually created by the abstraction/simplification process - transforming a particular historical development into an absolute (the very necessary simplifying of complexity), and is perpetuated by the myth so formed (some manage - some work). The access to derivation is blocked by the sense of limits of the (absolute) social order manifested as a rule, enabled by the depoliticising (isolating of past), and influenced by those with most interest in maintaining the myth - assuming that arguments which

seek to suggest that those being controlled have an interest in perpetuating the structure of domination (eg. reciprocity arguments in which the structure of domination is seen as providing safety, in the form of satisfaction of security needs) are justifications/rationalisations stemming from those in control and merely represent reinforcement of the myth by developing a further myth (the myth of reciprocity),¹⁶ which masks the asymmetrical nature of relations. Further, arguments which conceptualise a 'Corporate Society' involving for instance collaboration of trade unions with management (whether seen as maximising members' welfare within the system, or as temporarily accepting the existing order until ready to institute revolutionary change) in neglecting submerged factors, necessarily result in critical theorising which over-emphasises the degree of conscious awareness.

The second piece of illustrative material demonstrates the somewhat previous foundation upon which the myth (of domination) is built. Although the myth gives life to the idea that management have the right to control, it was suggested in the previous example that the negative connotations of control are often modified into less emotive terms such as motivate. This aids the clouding process which enables those in control to perpetuate the blocking of access to alternative views and the particular derivations of the rules of control, in that it is more amenable. In the following example, however, the management (perhaps innocently) come extremely close to exposing the myth by over-emphasising manifestations of the structure of domination, thereby revealing possible alternative views of the situation. The day is only saved by humour defusing the feelings of those being controlled, further illustrating the pervasiveness of the myth, in that the control problem for those being controlled is, how to survive

within the structure (this reading of the central problem being reinforced by the myth of reciprocity) even when the over-emphasis threatens exposure of the myth.

The material concerns the Reorganisation of North Midlands Board. The Reorganisation, planned and executed by a small team of the top management of the Board, was a major upheaval which aimed mainly at mechanistic structural change. It was decided to change the existing three-tier structure (of an H.Q., five Areas and twenty Districts) into a two-tier structure (with an H.Q. and just ten Districts).

This particular example concerns an unofficial debriefing given to Sheila, a shorthand typist who had just returned from an interview with the management team. The interview had been held as part of the changeover process in that it had been decided to reduce the staff in the District Office where Sheila worked, leaving approximately one quarter of the existing staff. The work being carried out by the other three quarters of the existing staff was to be transferred to another District Office (Central District) some 40 miles away in Central Town.

SCENARIO

Several Engineers (including myself) are standing around a coffee machine as Sheila enters.

1st Voice How did it go then Sheila?

Sheila I ... don't know really ...

2nd Voice Have you got a job?

3rd Voice What have they offered you?

Sheila A job in Central District

2nd Voice In Central?

3rd Voice How can you ...?

Sheila They said there would be a job
for me in Central District...

2nd Voice But ...?

Sheila ... And when I said, I can't move,
my husband works here ... they said..
I still haven't really got this ...
... they said, can't your husband
get a job in Central Town.

2nd Voice They said what?

3rd Voice Oh, come on!

4th Voice Bloody Hell!

2nd Voice Hey, Ted, have you heard this

Exuent in uproar.

The management team so obviously involved in their task of achieving Reorganisation as quickly as possible appear to have abstracted/simplified beyond sustainable limits. Their suggestion that Sheila's husband should consider obtaining a job in Central Town, simply to accommodate their own plans for reorganising North Midlands Board, is received with incredulity.

In communicating this simplification the management domination myth is threatened with exposure, because it contradicts an even more pervasive domination myth in western societies, that of the sovereignty of the husband as primordial breadwinner in the structure of the family.¹⁷ The seriousness of the suggestion that Sheila's husband should contemplate a job in Central Town and give up his present job to enable Sheila to move to Central District is confirmed in the taking seriously of the engineers.

The management domination myth was in fact subsequently rescued from complete exposure by the introduction of humour. The engineers enacted an action-reply in which the roles played were exaggerated and the issue was diffused in hilarity. Nevertheless, the episode became part of folk-lore and remained as a potential threat, which illustrates the need for continual reinforcement of myth.

One way in which the rules underlying myth are reinforced, thus underlining the belief in the rules, is by the development of rituals, which will in fact be considered in greater detail in the following chapter. The relationship between myth and ritual however, is obviously reflexive, and therefore, rituals develop from the formation of myth and concurrently support myth maintenance. The manipulation of rituals in order to maintain the principle of control and hence the existing structure of domination is a further feature of the relationship between myth and ritual. Cohen in fact has suggested that continual attention is required in order to perpetuate such myths:

'All the intellect, skill, and cunning of the ideologist, the politician, the theologian, and the artist and all the techniques of colour, music, poetry and drama are needed to create, accomplish and perpetuate the myth of authority in the face of continually subversive processes of different sorts.'¹⁸

The development of secrecy rituals, (for example, at Wenslow only certain things are allowed to be discussed or decided upon by certain levels of hierarchy and these have become institutionalised), is a potent source of defence against such forces, whereby those in control legitimate the right to act (control) in secrecy and the ritual feeds the myth. Thus the subversive processes are stemmed by the very

defining of them as subversive. They are defined in this scheme as threatening the secrecy which is so necessary to manage (control) in such a complex competitive world. The threat of competition becomes a justification in the legitimation of secrecy, but in effect legitimates far more than is at threat by competition, as it is used to feed the myth/ritual structure. Hierarchy is thereby mystified¹⁹ in secrecy rituals.

'Well he left the Company because he couldn't come to terms with the fact that he was thrust into the front line when there was any action, but was kept out of things whenever all was quiet.'

(Manager at Wenslow
Manufacturing Co.)

Domination is thus at the heart of the structure of organisations such as Wenslow Manufacturing Co. and North Midlands Board. Superiority of those in control is manifested as representing a hierarchy of knowledge and expertise and is continually legitimated by secrecy rituals. The manifestations of that supremacy has to be tempered however, in relation to the strength of the myth in the society in which it has developed (an indication of the strength being given by the preponderance of reinforcing myths such as the myth of reciprocity). The management of Wenslow and North Midlands for example, could probably not sustain the kind of myth which sustains the supremacy of an elite group such as the Tutsi of Ruanda. According to Maquet²⁰ the Tutsi perpetuated the myth that they were so superior to the Hutu, that they lived solely on liquids and ate no solid foods. To maintain the myth, the Tutsi had to swear to secrecy their Hutu servants, who saw their masters actually eating solid foods in their homes.²¹

Unfortunately, many organisation theorists have implicitly over-emphasised the forces which suggest temperance of this supremacy and in so doing have opted for some kind of pluralistic stance. This has subsequently led to the neglect of considerations of the derivation of that manifested supremacy, presumably under the assumption that if it is not total supremacy then it is not supremacy at all. Like an observer discovering that the branch of a tree has leaves which largely determine the directions in which the branch will be blown by the wind, the failure to realise that the branch is relatively unmoved by this process, due to the underlying structure is a fundamental oversimplification.

The reinstatement of hierarchical factors to prime importance (which is not say all important, since those being dominated can structure their worlds in relation to supposed hierarchy) in studies of power in organisations, thus becomes necessary.

The division discussed earlier between philosophers and men of action is of course an artificial one, since no-one completely spends his life as wholly one or the other (in fact the division may simply be a further perpetuating mechanism of the philosopher's hierarchy - another myth?). The idea that men of action are also to some extent philosophers is represented for instance, by the fact that not all Managers at Wenslow and North Midlands are as conceptually simplistic as John Manners and the Reorganisation Management team. The extent of their conceptual sophistication, however, is a constant source of trouble due to the continual reformulations made necessary by the need to reconcile the apparent contradictions inherent in trying to address the complexity of organisational life, (accounted for as trying to be

more realistic!) from within a comprehensive structure produced by
(very necessary) abstractions and simplifications.²²

The paradox of addressing complexity whilst producing 'blissful clarity', constructs an extremely pernicious arena within which to perform the awesome task of management. The problems of this arena are illustrated in the following piece of material from Wenslow Manufacturing Co. This example demonstrates some of the difficulties, by indicating the way in which any attempt to address the complexities of organisational life is (as part of the blocking process) defined as, 'not being a responsible manager.'

The material is an account given by a Manager who had recently attended a bi-monthly Managers' meeting. F.H.J. is the Industrial Relations Director, D.J.S. is the Managing Director.

SCENARIO

You might not believe this, but you'll find it interesting ... For Christ's sake never tell anyone who's told you but during the meeting we'd had F.H.J. a right performance that was reporting on the strike results really bloody childish it was holier than thou ... how we won the war because we were the goodies ... pathetic anyway, at the end of the meeting D.J.S. gets up and asks all non-managers to leave ... there were one or two deputies there ... asks them all to leave 'what now' - we started exchanging looks?

Then D.J.S. launches into a well I don't know whether you'd call it a plea or a lecture he was certainly very angry underneath. His hands were shaking although he didn't shout he spoke very quietly ... about how he's heard so much back-biting and criticism of late that he's sick to death of it management is difficult enough without all this criticism.

in future managers will behave like responsible men there will be no more criticism yes, he actually said that - 'there will be no more criticism.' by managers about managers, and by managers about him!

If it hadn't been so deadly serious I'd have pissed myself

In issuing this directive of 'no more criticism', the Managing Director seems to assume that he has only to issue a command and it will be obeyed - a kind of Dalek Management as it was described by one manager! His authoritarian invective perhaps suggests that he himself has difficulty in addressing the complexities of managing, and his consequent emphasis upon simplification (by defining criticism as unnecessary) reinforces the structure of domination by demonstrating that the nature of this structure is indeed a command structure. The underlining of the hierarchy of command (confirming the absolute and illustrating the necessity of the consideration of submerged factors such as the manifestations of the power of the status-quo for any comprehensive approach to the study of power in organisations) thereby makes the addressing of complexity even more difficult for other Managers who are also trying to cope with the paradox.

'You either keep quiet and go along with it, or you leave - go elsewhere of course you could make it known how you feel if you want to commit suicide'.

(Manager at Wenslow
Manufacturing Co.)

This difficulty of obeying the chief in the light of his so obviously simplistic invective is illustrated by the way in which the Manager giving the account uses humour (again!) to diffuse the seriousness of

the Managing Director's pronouncement. Yet the Managing Director has to be obeyed and therefore anyone who does not comply (being too realistic) is castigated (generally resulting in departure!).

The blocking of access to alternative views is, thus, reinforced by defining anything which does not subscribe in effect to the myth of domination, as not being responsible management. Would-be philosophers amongst men of action are defined as subversive, and as a part of all the similar problems which still remain and are equally defined as subversive - indiscipline, apathy, industrial conflict, low morale, industrial democracy pressures etc. The existence of such problems²³ is seen (by D.J.S. et al) as indicative of the impossibility of the job of being a manager. The problems are seen as unsolvable, even unapproachable, and there is a strong sense in which any Manager who justifies his actions as being more realistic in attempting to 'establish blissful clarity' is regarded (at best) as being idealistic.

' "I understand," he said. "You speak of the city whose foundation we have been describing, which has its being in words; for there is no spot on earth, I imagine, where it exists."

"No," I said, "but perhaps it is laid up in heaven as a pattern for him who wills to see, and seeing, to found a city in himself. Whether it exists anywhere or ever will exist, is no matter. His conduct will be an expression of the laws of that city alone, and of no other."

"That is likely enough," he said.'

(Plato, The Republic)

The unease created in this situation for some managers is illustrated by statements indicating, sometimes vague dissatisfaction such as,

'..... You know I really used to enjoy coming to work look forward to it but now I could cheerfully drive straight past the entrance in a morning and spend the day in the hills', and sometimes more directly such as, '..... I no longer feel that I can manage in this situation no more than that I don't want to it's as though it just doesn't seem right anymore' It is as though the right to manage has become a 'wrong', although actually experienced as a, 'don't want to', the derivation thereby remaining shrouded.

The manifestations of this unease are again somewhat different in, for instance, Wenslow Manufacturing Co. and North Midlands Board. In the latter such unease is more likely to be productive of underactivity whereas in the former, overactivity is more likely. In both organisations there seemed to be a feeling of, 'Nothing we do can substantially alter things,' but whereas at North Midlands this would result in, '..... so we won't bother,' at Wenslow it would be more like, '..... but we'd better make it appear that we are striving to alter things -look busy-otherwise we shall be blamed.' In fact such attempts to avoid blame at Wenslow were not very successful, since there was a continual 'departure' of Managers.

'The real tragedy is, this Company has a great product it has the potential to be a great Company to work for.'

(Manager at Wenslow
Manufacturing Co.)

During my period of fifteen months and the twelve months prior to this, there had been ten out of a total of thirty departures amongst those

who were organisationally credited with the title Manager, and not many of those had left voluntarily. Further there was a particularly high turnover amongst other staff as illustrated in the summoning of Jack Fisher the Administration Manager to the Managing Director's office, in the story related in the Introduction. This high turnover rather than leading to an investigation of causes, merely increased the unease, as more and more demands were made upon people. One manager described the paradox generated as leading to a job specification for managers at Wenslow as constituting, '.....must be a subservient innovator.....'

The overactivity syndrome is further illustrated by the orientation to prospective recruits of the Sales Director of Wenslow. He repeatedly told me that he wanted people with, 'fire in the belly' (a favourite cliché of sales people) for employment in his Department, but when I pressed him (also continually) to explain just how one identified this in prospective candidates, he replied, 'I want to see every candidate for any job in my Department walk along the corridor towards me, so that I can see whether they have the right glands!'

The underactivity more typical of North Midlands is best epitomised by the degree and amount of 'role drift'.²⁴ A good example of this was occasioned by a complaint made by the Managing Director of a prestigious local company to North Midlands Board. The complaint concerned the size of capital contribution he was being asked to pay towards the cost of providing a supply to a new factory being erected by his company. I had been responsible for this

particular negotiation and quotation, and had in accordance with procedure (having repeatedly checked my calculations) rejected the Managing Director's appeals to reduce the contribution required. He, having become tired of going over the same ground again and again, decided to complain and demand to see someone in higher authority. An appointment was duly made for him to see the Divisional Manager.

About two hours before the scheduled time of the appointment, I accidentally overheard a conversation in which the Divisional Manager told the Area Manager (his immediate subordinate) that unfortunately something had come up and that he would not be able to attend the meeting. He asked the Area Manager to attend in his place, and the Area Manager agreed. Ten minutes later not knowing that I had overheard this conversation (office partitions can be very thin!) the Area Manager came to me, and told me that neither himself nor the Divisional Manager would be able to attend the meeting, and would I, 'do the honours'. Protests about the ludicrous situation of me again meeting the Managing Director in question were dismissed, and I duly steeled myself to explain the strange forces of delegation to our visitor. In fact such hierarchical drift was fairly typical - a foreman was on one occasion seen to point to his steel-capped boot toe and remark, 'It's a good job we don't have a ship's cat around here!' It was enabled to be sustained in the above example presumably because the Managing Director of the local company decided to spend his time on more productive matters and let his complaint drop. Such drift however, soon communicates and becomes manifested in underactivity

in various other quarters.

'We thought we couldn't end without a word for
Henry Bell.
He's everyone's friend, except those who sell.
If Henry had his way and was given the chance,
There'd be room in the stores to hold the
annual dance.'

(Annual Dance Calypso,
North Midlands Board)

The idea of underactivity and overactivity of course bears very little relation to effectiveness (whatever version of this elusive notion is subscribed to) and in the next chapter, the part played by such underactivity and overactivity in rituals will be examined. But first a review of procedure.

The extent of the persuasiveness of this account of the way of life of managers rests in the degree of convincing of the reader, which in turn is determined by the coherence, consistency and plausibility in relation to the reader's orientations. This process of convincing of the reader places some responsibility upon the reader for emerging theoretical traditions. In doing this there are in addition all kinds of emotional and potentially crippling communication problems. Such problems are nevertheless part of the human condition and therefore unavoidable in any explication of the form of life (as emerging social analysis).

'The art of tacit knowing thus implies the claim that its result is an aspect of reality which, as such, may yet reveal its truth in an inexhaustable range of unknown and perhaps, still unthinkable ways.'

(Michael Polanyi, Knowing and Being)

Such a formulation not only replaces more questionable formulations, which give the writer/researcher total responsibility for determining the extent of his contribution to knowledge, but also reconstitutes the relativism problem in a manner more consistent with the form of life.

Thus the account of underactivity and overactivity for instance, is itself simply one persons way of describing (analysing) the way of life of managers, and therefore is a part of the form of life (the doing of social analysis). Attempts to construct hypotheses in a manner which can be measured (eg estimating the degree or incidence of under/overactivity) not only are attempting to construct generalisations leading to laws, predictability in general terms, etc, on decidedly relativist (in those terms) conceptions (ie one account) but in ignoring the empirical/rational problem, contain the seeds of their own epistemological insecurity. Such an account is not, and cannot be conceived in, an empirical virginity.

The treatment of an account however, as a discourse between the writer's reading (as observer) of the situation and the reader's reading, reconstitutes the epistemological problem albeit as a problem involving relativism, in that such a discourse can only be relative, but in contradistinction to a universal relativism (which simply is not possible) reconstitutes it as the very essence of the developing form of life. The criticism that such a formulation results in, 'one account being as good as another'; does not therefore hold, and in implicitly detracting from the responsibility of the reader, (leading to the supposed transcending of this problem

by, in some way, pinning on the flag of validation by the writer) constructs a schema with much more of a relativist problem by its very nature. Any schema aiming to provide general laws, predictability in general terms, etc, constructs its own relativist problem in absolute terms, quite distinct from the relativism of persuasiveness (which is a relative explication of the form of life, but a particular relative not any relative - ie specific to the discourse which it provokes in the course of its active life).

This chapter has examined the means by which access is blocked to derivation of organisationally entrenched absolutes (the right to manage, and the sovereignty of management). It has been suggested that the depoliticised speech of myth which subsumes normal speech, is a central feature of the blocking. The chapter has highlighted examples of manifestations of this depoliticised speech, and it has been argued that myths thus created form the basis of the symbolic permanence acquired by the structure of domination, being created and re-created as the inevitable essence of organisation as hierarchy.

In the following chapter the discussion of the means by which symbolic permanence is acquired is extended into an examination of the factors which reinforce the created and re-created structure of domination.

MAINTAINING CUSTOMARY RELATIONS

In the preceding chapter an examination was made of the way in which certain views of the world become absolutised and thereby constitute the very essence of structures of domination. In this chapter the concern turns to the way in which such structures are maintained as self-constituting, neutral, and inevitable factors in organisational life.

Firth has argued that one of the functions of symbols is to provide convenience and simplification in order to facilitate social organisation.

'Or we can hold that for much of our life we deal with reality, in our relations with people and things, both mental and physical, and that symbolisation is a mode of operation which is basic and ubiquitous, but not the sole mode of dealing with reality. Its functions are those of convenience and simplification, of giving scope for imaginative development, of providing disguise for painful impact, of facilitating social interaction and co-operation'.¹

The 'providing disguise for painful impact' certainly aligns more with the illustrative materials presented in the thesis, than do some of the traditional theories of power in organisations, and the discrepancy referred to earlier can be approached from this direction, with a greater prospect of elucidation. Cohen in fact has argued that custom in 'modern' society is as strange and as sovereign as in 'primitive' society.

'A rapidly accumulating body of evidence indicates that the bizarre and the exotic in the patterns of social behaviour are not the exclusive monopoly of pre-industrial societies.'

2

Examples of the bizarre (in terms of my estimate of normative expectations) abound in my field notes, and suggest attention could be profitably turned to such factors. A typical illustration is given by the way in which Jack Fisher speaks symbolically with his tie, to the Managing Director of Wenslow (story related in chapter one) but there were many other instances of such symbolic dimensions - such as the Manager who spoke to the silent majority by abstracting part of a memorandum sent to him by his superior, and placing 'the ridiculous instructions he was being given' on all the Notice Boards in the factory at Wenslow.

'An Industrial Relations Manager at Wenslow Manufacturing Co. lost his job after he circulated photocopies of a warning letter he had received from his superior. The copies with Mr. Clarke's own comments endorsed were circulated to managers, foremen and chargehands, and some ended up on factory notice boards, an industrial tribunal heard yesterday.

Counsel for Wenslow Manufacturing Co. said;
"This was an act tantamount to sabotage by a man minding his machine".'

(Wenslow Morning News, 4.7.79)

As discussed in chapter six, M. Douglas has argued that symbols cannot be understood in isolation, and that the pattern of symbols gives the meaning. One of the ways in which such patterns are represented is in the structure of rituals, and this is undoubtedly fundamental in the maintenance of custom and in the acquiring of symbolic permanence of structures of domination.

The absence of a social science meta-language and the problem of the double hermeneutic (interchange of concepts between members and social scientists - in so far as these are different) is particularly evidenced by a term such as 'ritual'. There is a connotation of ritual which is to suggest that ritualistic behaviour is in some way representative of mindless behaviour. It is seen as in some way indicative of emptiness, and the whole idea of ritualistic behaviour is regarded as something to be deprecated, whereas it may be a very necessary part of human existence. M. Douglas has argued for a distinction to be made between ritualised ritual and positive ritual, with regard to religious practice.

'It is fair enough that 'ritualised' ritual should fall into contempt. But it is illogical to despise all ritual, all symbolic action as such. To use the word ritual to mean empty symbols of conformity, leaving us with no word to stand for symbols of genuine conformity, is seriously disabling to the sociology of religion. For the problem of empty symbols is still a problem about the relation of symbols to social life, and one which needs an unprejudiced vocabulary.'₃

In this chapter I shall take a perspective which regards both empty and positive rituals as necessary enabling factors of organisational life (eg. empty rituals as time-filling necessities, as defences against anxieties - existential neuroses - such as consistent preoccupation with mundane/routine activities which might be encountered as manifestations of role drift). In adopting such a perspective I shall implicitly question the idea of the emptiness of empty rituals and seek to transcend the double hermeneutic by locating the manifestations of what is to be a ritual, in its relation to a representation of power relations rather than as exemplifying a typification, for definitional

purposes of ritual itself.

In the preceding chapter reference was made to secrecy rituals at Wenslow Manufacturing Co., in the way that certain items are only permissible on agendas which concern particular levels of hierarchy. Such secrecy rituals are clearly illuminating to the maintenance of the existing structure of domination, not only from the view of closing off access to the very items which might generate desire/need for change, but in ritualising secrecy, the very closing off of access is legitimised. The legitimisation is of course not absolute and secrecy is a favourite target of critical members (whether defined as, trade union activists, militant shop floor workers, or idealistic - realistic, sic - managers). Nevertheless, such secrecy largely remains, and although attacks may be a part of a considerable 'legitimation crisis',⁴ the pervasiveness of secrecy rituals is paramount to the maintenance of structures of domination, and to the acquiring of symbolic permanence.

A good example of this kind of secrecy is appraisal-of-performance practices, and indeed the whole structure of such schemes is based upon rituals of periodic assessment which are carried out and recorded in legitimated secrecy. Such legitimation, however, in being accounted for as protecting individuals' personal details masks the question of protection from whom? In fact this protection constitutes an exposure to forces located in - at best - the vagueries of a practice merely masquerading as a contribution to improving performance. At North Midlands for instance periodic appraisal interviews were often referred to as, 'Going to the Travel Agent' since the person who did most of the appraising interpreted everyone's career as needing

experience of other Departments, and hence it was uncertain where one would be working tomorrow after an appraisal interview - although not many Cook's Tour arrangements actually reached fruition, because it was generally possible to subvert transfers to more unfavourable locations, by delaying, pleading overwork etc.

Considering that so many organisations are supposedly (ie. according to the dominant administrative logic) in existence to make profits, it is paradoxical that so much secrecy surrounds the actual figures. The following piece of illustrative material amply demonstrates the apparent contradictions inherent in the way financial matters are treated. The material concerns an account given to me by a Management Accountant at Wenslow Manufacturing Co. and refers to a meeting previously held to discuss the annual forecast of expenditure (the budget) for a particular Production Department.

SCENARIO

'Well at the end of the meeting I just gave up. It really is a waste of time you know we have these meetings and fix well supposedly fix figures but really as we all know, the figures are already fixed. How could we fix the figures anyway? As you know Managers are not given access to profit figures and I'm not allowed to tell them which is a bit of a laugh, since I don't really know either! Budgetary Control eh? Oh sure you could say it was 'control', and not just 'forecasting' - in that targets have to be met, or else! But since those actually controlling the resources - people, raw materials - don't know can't relate to actual profits it's control from above So what are we doing? It's not involvement it's appeasement. Why don't they just hand down targets that's what they're doing in effect.'

One impact of this account is to suggest that the meetings between

managers to decide annual forecasts of expenditure, are a waste of time, since the actual figures they will be allowed to spend will be decided elsewhere (by the Board of Directors). This is to suggest that such manager's meetings are in fact in some way empty rituals, and that the real decisions are taken in secrecy in a higher level ritual. Such an account however in its persuasiveness abstracts from the fact that other people at lower levels of hierarchy regard such manager's meetings as secrecy rituals and their own activities (in providing information for use in such secret manager's meetings) as empty rituals, since anything they do will be over-ridden by the managers in secret.

Thus the idea of secrecy rituals and empty rituals is ingrained in the life of being a manager, and the defining as empty or secret is dependent upon situation and perspective, the same ritual being defined as both, in different circumstances. This reinforces the argument that ritual must be regarded as a homonymic term rather than a definitional term. The idea of empty rituals forming refuges against some of the ills of organisational life (as for instance defences against anxiety produced by uncertainty and ambiguity) is contained in the fact that the giving of an account as reproduced above is extremely unusual, and was perhaps only given because the Management Accountant concerned was about to leave the Organisation. The exposing of the emptiness of the ritual would indeed be considered as deviant and this deviancy would be reinforced by a fear of being discovered and labelled oneself as deviant, or perhaps worse as disruptive (the oppressive face of the structure of domination in action).

This oppressiveness will be illustrated further, but in the meantime

it will be more fruitful to pursue an examination of some of the attempts to counter the effects of such secrecy by demonstrating openness. Although the rather strange withholding of profit information from the people who are responsible for making the profits at Wenslow Manufacturing Co. can be contrasted with the altogether more open approach to financial information at North Midlands Board (and the more open approach to profit - or surplus to be more esoterically accurate - in a nationalised concern than in a private sector company is not without its own cultural ironies) it is really in the broader field of what comes to be called communications in general that the demonstration of openness is articulated.

At North Midlands Board one of the perceived big issues in communications is evidenced by a great concern for Joint Consultation, and local committees are constituted in every substantial location. Unfortunately however these 'Broadcasting to the people' structures are to a large extent broadcasting on a wavelength to which no-one much listens. The concentration of pay negotiations at national level results in the agendas of the local consultative committees resorting to 'tea and toilets' issues, and in fact in Eastern District of North Midlands the monthly meeting is referred to as 'workers playtime'. Such diffusion in humour however masks the fact that even in idealistic intention, such a consultative process is conceived as a broadcasting medium (with some informing others of intentions) rather than as a genuine consultative vehicle and therefore even the means of transcending secrecy reinforces the structure of domination by institutionalising the ritual of control.

The whole idea of improving communications is of course entrenched in a hierarchy-of-control view of organisation, and the widespread use of training courses in communication skills is an example of the transformation of a structural problem (dysfunctions in the structure of domination stemming from the submerged derivations of such structures manifested as legitimisation crises) into an interpersonal solution. This closing off of access to the underlying structure and defining of problems as problems of interpersonal factors is also apparent in many other areas of training undertaken in such organisations. The sending of people on courses to improve, leadership, negotiating skills, etc. whilst perhaps being all very well in themselves (as personal growth experiences?) are so often paralysed by over-expectation, and not surprisingly soon come to be regarded as empty-rituals.

Reinforcing rituals of secrecy, which effectively underline the structure of domination, is a whole infrastructure of rituals which emphasise the 'distinctiveness'⁵ of certain groups of people in the organisation. The dominant coalition is one such potent example, and indeed the managers at Wenslow Manufacturing Co. are made very much aware of the position of Directors to whom they are subordinate. This making aware however is not just an overt series of commands (although such commanding is sometimes used) but is built up and sustained in an elaborate structure of rituals which subtly demonstrates the distinctiveness and thereby the superiority, and, by not thus needing continual demonstration overtly in relationships, forms the very essence of the acquiring of symbolic permanence.

Such demonstration of distinctiveness is evidenced for instance in the

way that Directors at Wenslow (the Board consists of the Managing Director and five Functional Directors) consistently go to lunch fifteen minutes behind everyone else (notwithstanding some who are designated to take a later lunch in order to provide 'cover') thereby conveying the message that, 'things are difficult when one is a Director - one cannot just leave everything at an appointed hour and go to lunch'. The other side of the coin however is demonstrated in the fact that the Directors also return from lunch at a different time, but this time thirty minutes after everyone else, thereby conveying the message, 'However, being a Director does give certain privileges - and in any case lunch in the Board Room is a part of the working day, and again we cannot just switch-off'.

This apparent ambiguity rather than presenting a problem to members in accomplishing everyday life, in fact can be seen to be the very means by which such accomplishment is made possible. It does however constitute the problematic of elucidating the way of life! As Bourdieu has argued such symbolic ambiguity has no practical consequences (of the kind associated with explicating the way of life).

'Thanks to "polythesis", the "confusion of spheres", as the logicians call it, resulting from the highly economical, but necessarily approximate, application of the same scheme to different logical universes, can pass unnoticed because it entails no practical consequences

'The fact that symbolic objects and practices can enter without contradiction into successive relationships set up from different points of view means that they are subject to over-determination through indetermination: the application to the same objects or practices of different schemes (such as opening/closingetc) which, at the degree of precision (ie. of imprecision) with which they are defined, are all practically equivalent is the source of

the polysemy characterising the fundamental relationships in the symbolic system, which are always determined in several respects at once.'

6

Thus the ambiguity of symbols in this view becomes the vehicle in which members make their way as they construct persuasive accounts (involving various overdeterminations) about the way in which they structure organisational life, in efforts to overcome incomprehension (the indetermination in the ambiguity of symbols). Any scheme which seeks to elucidate such a way of life obviously neglects such factors at its peril, and indeed surely cannot itself escape similar mechanisms, in which the overdetermination (of for instance any attempt to construct second-order logical universes) of the indetermination, is a function of the persuasiveness of such second-order accounts. The ambiguities are the way of life and can only be approached by discourse between reader and writer as constituted in the tension between persuasiveness and overdetermination. Any attempt to classify or categorise alternative determination of symbols is likely to destroy a part of the symbolic infrastructure (eg. any attempt to measure constituents of, or frequency of, etc. a ritual, must influence and most probably divert or redefine the ritual). As Bourdieu continues:

'But in relating objects and selecting aspects, this practical taxonomy applies, successively or simultaneously, principles which are all indirectly reducible to one another, and this enables it to classify the same "data" from several different standpoints without classifying them in different ways (whereas a more rigorous system would make as many classifications as it found properties).'

7

This is surely to suggest that the approach involves the production

of different persuasive accounts (eg. Bauman's scheme of 'successive recapitulation' - 'ever more voluminous, but always selective'⁸) rather than the production of a definitive account (eg. by rigorous/scientific, sic, refining) which is not to argue that such persuasive accounts should abandon rigour.

Cohen has identified several areas in which distinctiveness can be emphasised, including the creation of mythologies of descent (eg. class exclusivity involving an elaborate infrastructure of common public school, university etc): female symbolism (eg. manipulation of mythology of descent - 'My daughter is too good to work here'); ritual belief practices (eg. religious - dissemination of information about common church attendance - and quasi-religious masonic involvement, common Lodge etc); moral exclusiveness (eg. exclusive fraternising, eating together, parading a common moral conscience); and style of life (eg. dress - sober/expensive suit wearing uncompromising - 'a Director never removes his tie even in hot weather, when all about them are losing theirs!') Such a complex structure with all its ambiguities does however produce its moments of humour - like the British Airways pilot being interviewed on BBC Television under a media-defined heading of 'Industrial Democracy', who gave an account of life-on-the-flight-deck, '..... Oh yes its a very friendly atmosphere, and of course I allow the use of first names on my flight deck so long as they call me Sir!'

The idea of belonging, inherent in the notion of the distinctiveness of a group has been studied extensively by anthropologists, and in particular the notion of totemism has been developed. Lewis⁹ in interpreting Durkheim provides one definition of totems as, 'mystically

and the way in which status-symbols are collected and emphasised in organisational life certainly has something of this kind of flavour.

In arguing that such status-symbols contribute to the acquiring of symbolic permanence of structures of domination I shall be concerned with illustrating the kinds of totemic clusters associated with certain levels of hierarchy, rather than attempting to generate an illumination of a comprehensive theory of social status such as that proposed by Weber.¹⁰

One interesting example which also demonstrates the link between secrecy and status rituals, was highlighted in a conversation I had with an engineer of my previous acquaintance, who related a story about a hierarchy-of-dining-rooms. Such a hierarchy is of course fairly typical among the peoples with which this thesis is concerned, but this particular story illuminates the tremendous importance attached to such a hierarchy. The company concerned in the story is a steel company in the private sector, with a factory employing about 5,000 people in the same northern town as Wenslow Manufacturing Co. The engineer who related the story had himself been involved in the action, in the form of a service engineer for an extension to the Amenities Block in the factory. He had been given the task by a Director which in itself was rather unusual and represented the first time he had actually spoken to a Director. He was to prepare a services layout in fact, for an extension to the part of the building which housed the Managers' Dining Room, and for an alteration to the dining room itself. It appeared that the Managers' Dining Room was to have a section partitioned off for the use of Senior-Managers (a new rank

recently introduced between that of Director and Manager) and that the extension of the building was to comprise a toilet block, 'so that Senior Managers do not have to pass through the Managers' Dining Room to go to the toilet.' The engineer who related the story was in fact instructed by the Director who gave him the task, to 'keep it under his hat', the managers were not to learn of this breakaway movement until it had actually happened. The engineer complied with the instructions and I suppose got a good deal of amusement out of the situation, particularly the secrecy aspect, but in fact the real hilarity in the situation came much later during construction, when (in the context of total practical denial of knowledge of what the building work was for) it was discovered that the operation had been conducted in such secrecy that planning permission for the building had not been obtained.

The rituals of distinctiveness which are particularly status centred are nowhere more apparent than in the rituals surrounding the exclusiveness of the Managing Director. This was brought home forcibly to me at the first meeting I attended at Wenslow Manufacturing Co. at which the Managing Director was present. The meeting was convened as a progress review about a subject which was under my control, and since I would probably be the first to speak, I was busy looking over my files when the Managing Director entered. The meeting was in fact being held in the 'Round Table Room' (that well known symbol of hierarchies of control) and there were four other Directors present and three other managers. Being engrossed in my files I did not actually detect the precise moment of the Managing Director's entry, but I became aware that something was amiss, and on looking up saw that everyone in the room had stood up because the Managing

Director had arrived. Of course I made an embarrassed gesture of standing up, by which time everyone else had sat down. The Managing Director gave me a vague wave of his arm, perhaps even as embarrassed as myself - or perhaps annoyed that no-one had initiated me.

The way in which such rituals reinforce the structure of domination is further demonstrated by the reaction to this kind of procedure. As opportunity arose I referred back to this incident in conversations with other people who had been present, and whether their reaction was apparently accepting ('Well I think it's rather a nice gesture of respect it shows that we respect his position and responsibility') or apparently rejecting ('Yeh, well, I try to remain standing up looking out of the window or something until he's arrived, and then I don't have to comply') the effect of underlining the supremacy is the same. It is not apparently considered practical to openly be seen to contravene the norm.

There were many more such examples concerning the exclusivity of the Managing Director at Wenslow Manufacturing Co., such as, the law of uni-directional access ('Never visit the MD unless invited') and on one occasion I was intercepted by his secretary, on my way to see him, having been given a message that he wished to speak to me. I was told that he had been trying to contact me on the telephone, and therefore I must get in touch with him by telephone, and must not visit him in-the-flesh unless he specifically requested me to do so.

If at any time I should actually be ordered into his presence, I was told that under no circumstances must I enter improperly dressed (ie. without a jacket - ties of course being absolutely essential throughout

Wenslowland and therefore not worthy of mention). Furthermore, I must not sit down until actually requested to do so.

The way in which the Managing Director contacted anyone by telephone was also rich in symbolism. The equipment had been connected so that whenever he rang anyone on the internal telephone, instead of the normal 'Brrrrr.....Brrrrr' double tone, which occurred when anyone else was ringing, he transmitted a single continuous tone, 'Brrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr', it thereby being apparent that this was no ordinary call you were about to receive. Of course there were complications, since this automatic continuous tone could be simulated by the telephonists on the external telephone switchboard which was operated manually, and so they had to be told to manually try to reproduce the normal double tone of an automatic system! House rules were such that if caught 'out of ones ground' when the siren blew, it was essential to get back as quickly as possible, and frequently conversations would be left in midstream as someone suddenly set a low-swallow-dive course for their telephone. The similarity of the tone with an emergency siren did in fact reinforce the chilling sense of fear of being summoned, and no-one was exempt from this. Even fellow Directors have been known to turn pale as they broke away to run to answer the insistent call.

The structure of status-symbols is closely integrated with means of reward (and indeed punishment¹¹), and hierarchies of status are common bases for the development of rituals, most of which reconstitute structures of domination. At Wenslow for instance, in addition to hierarchies of dining rooms, there are hierarchies of car parks, hierarchies of office-space, and hierarchies of toilets. As an example of the latter, there are separate exclusive toilet facilities for,

Directors, Director's Secretaries (not for the use of Manager's Secretaries!), Managers, other office staff, and works-people.

It is nevertheless, the dining rooms which are the most closely guarded, and the managers for example have a Meals Committee which is entrusted to watch over the sanctity of the place. It is traditional for instance, despite normal hierarchical supremacy for a Director not to enter the Managers' Dining Room unless invited to do so by a Meals Committee representative. A story related to me by one manager will illustrate the importance attached to the sanctity of the space. The particular manager concerned had scheduled a meeting with the people in one of the Sections under his control. He described it as a crucial meeting involving the question of redundancy of some of the people he was to meet. Because all the rooms available for meetings on the company were to be occupied due to the visit of external auditors, he was in difficulty with where to hold his meeting until another manager (on reflection perhaps mischievously) suggested the Managers' Dining Room. The meeting was duly arranged for that afternoon at 4.00PM (always a good time to announce redundancies). On arrival however some five minutes before the scheduled time, the manager found the door barred by the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Meals Committee, who categorically refused him entry. He was informed that he could not use the room because he had not sought the permission of the Committee. Biting his tongue, he proceeded to ask permission, but on stating the purpose for which he required it, permission was refused on the grounds that people who belonged to a trades union could not possibly be allowed access into the room in which the managers eat! A somewhat heated exchange followed, but short of physical violence the Manager could not get access and in fact had to quickly get round his people

and postpone the meeting, to avoid the embarrassment of having them turned away at the door.

There were other examples of such apparent insensitivity in the enforcement of the rules of ritual, resulting in bizarre occurrences. One of the most devious was related to me by a manager who had to convince his wife that she had not been to a race meeting which he had taken her to the previous Saturday. The circumstances surrounding this strange sequence of events concerned a race meeting at which Wenslow Manufacturing Co. were sponsoring a race - the Wenslow Stakes. This was a new advertising area for the company and several managers had taken their wives on an outing to witness this new venture. The following week however, on the day that some of the same managers and wives were to attend a function at which the 'Boss-Man-International' from the US Parent Company was to be present, all the managers concerned were gathered together and told to erase the race excursion from their memories and to instruct their wives to do the same. It transpired that the Managing Director had discovered that the 'Boss-Man-International' had religious objections to horse racing, and so the order was issued to, rewrite-the-history-books. All future sponsorship was cancelled, and all reference to that which had already taken place was forbidden (even the drafts of the next Company Journal were searched for any reference to the sponsorship). The exercise was later estimated to have cost the company about £20,000 (of measurable costs).

Reference was made earlier to the oppressiveness of the structure of domination and the way in which this dimension is transmitted in symbols. The foregoing discussion has illustrated some of this and a few examples of more overt action will emphasise the fact that such

symbolic structure legitimates a considerable degree of overt oppressiveness.

Jack Fisher (of the pencil and file security system) told me of an occasion on which he had been hospitalised, and yet summoned to appear - or else. He had apparently been suffering for some time, with a painful foot, which he attributed to a severe bruising received whilst working in his garden at home. On one particular morning on arrival at work the pain troubled him so much that he decided to visit his doctor right away. He detailed his secretary as to where and how he could be contacted, and since he was due to attend a meeting later in the morning at which the Managing Director would be present, he decided to play-it-safe, and also informed the Managing Director's secretary of his whereabouts, in case he was delayed. His doctor was in fact so concerned with the foot that he sent him direct to hospital for an x-ray. This revealed a fracture in the foot and so a plaster-of-paris operation was planned immediately. By this time it was of course well into the afternoon, and so at the first opportunity Jack Fisher asked for a message to be sent to his wife informing her of his whereabouts. His wife on hearing of his hospitalisation left immediately to visit him and on arrival in a considerable state of anxiety produced a telegram which she had opened on learning of her husband's hospitalisation. The telegram was from Wenslow ordering Jack Fisher to return immediately to explain his unauthorised absence - assuming that he wished to continue in employment!

A similar example from Jack Fisher's Department was related to me by one of his Assistants. This person had also been off sick, but in

this case for some considerable time (approximately 3 months), and had been hospitalised for an extremely serious 'internal plumbing' operation. Just prior to returning to work, the annual review of salaries had been carried out, and since this was during 'phase two' of the recent 'pay policy' (1976/77) everyone on the company had received the same amount - except that is for Jack Fisher's Assistant who despite Fisher's vehement protests had been isolated and excluded from a salary increase on the grounds that he was contributing nothing to the operations of the company. When I later checked out this story with Jack Fisher, he not only confirmed it, but added that on return to work, on discovering what had happened, his Assistant had angrily taken off his twenty-five-year-award watch and thrown it at Jack Fisher. After more protestations he was finally given the increase in salary, but on the grounds that now he had returned to work, he was again contributing to the company's operations. One begins to capture something of Jack Fisher's security obsession, but events of this nature were not exclusive to his sphere of operations. I am reminded of the Director who was informed on a Friday evening that he would find his door with a different lock on it when he arrived on the Monday morning, since he was being replaced, and therefore if he had anything he wished to remove which belonged to him personally, then he had better do it right away (he in fact escaped the normal boot-out-the-door, reputedly because he was Chairman of the local branch of his Professional Institution for that year, and the company wished to avoid any publicity that might ensue from firing such a person - but because he was not actually being 'put on the streets', he was not therefore entitled to a reasonable degree of notice).

The idea of an oppressiveness in the structure of domination suggests

something of a persecutory or even prison atmosphere, and in that most of these examples are taken from Wenslow Manufacturing Co., there is indeed an element of being 'chained', in the language of members. Wenslow is often referred to for instance as, Colditz Castle. The way of life however is never one of total domination (and in fact life at Fielding and Co. and North Midlands Board is considerably less oppressive whilst always containing the basis of such oppressiveness).

'You've come up here to get stuck into a job, not to concern yourself with attending a college of Further Education You have little chance of being selected for day release, since you've only just joined The fact that you were previously with another Area Board does not concern us Anyway it won't do you any harm to miss a year of your studies'

(Chief Education and Training
Officer, North Midlands Board)

As Sykes argued in his study of a Maximum Security Prison:

'The custodians of the New Jersey State Prison, far from being converted into tyrants, are under strong pressure to compromise their captives, for it is a paradox that they can ensure their dominance only by allowing it to be corrupted.'¹²

Of course the fact that Wenslow for instance is not a maximum security prison, can be seen to give more rather than less licence for oppression, since inmates are free to leave at any time - and they frequently do.

'In the end I felt that I had to leave, because I couldn't face having to put up with what the

man above me was doing and of course
I knew that I couldn't change that.'

(Manager at Wenslow
Manufacturing Co.)

It could be argued that the compromising of the captives is amply demonstrated by attempts to counter the image of secrecy as described, but this is further illustrated by the way in which reward rituals are actually enforced (ie. 'you will be rewarded - or else').

An illuminating example of this kind of activity was occasioned by the coincidence of a twenty-five-year-award presentation ceremony, with a death in the same Department. The award concerned was scheduled to be presented to a female Chargehand whose Foreman in charge had a few days earlier unfortunately suffered a heart attack. On the morning of the presentation the Chargehand was collected from her home, as is the custom, in a hired Rolls Royce motor car, and so had not had contact with anyone in the company that morning until she arrived for the presentation. The news was concurrently received at the company that morning, that the Foreman, with whom the Chargehand had worked closely for many years, had died during the night.

It was realised by the Directors that the Chargehand would be upset by this news, but rather than accepting the advice of most of the people who knew of the death to postpone the presentation ceremony, they decided that the ceremony should go ahead ('you can't put off a twenty-five year award - that would be unfair on the recipient - after all it is, her day'¹³). Accordingly, instructions were sent round the company that under no circumstances was the Chargehand to be informed of the death of the Foreman until after the ceremony. The

ensuing stress placed upon her (and the Foreman's) close associates to display pleasure and congratulations, whilst feeling inner grief, made for one of the most bizarre ceremonies I have ever witnessed.

This compromising of members by those in control, is evidenced in another context by the elaborate structure of rituals surrounding the recruitment of new members. Cleverley¹⁴ has argued that recruiting a new member into an organisation is effectively acting out a rite of passage, and Silverman and Jones¹⁵ have captured some of the ritualistic essence of carrying out recruitment. The compromising is demonstrated in the degree to which the responses have become standardised, based upon what candidates know will be expected of them, given that most people are faced with actually being successful in getting a job eventually - to survive - there are no real alternatives. Typical ritual questions are ingrained into the recruitment trail - such as, 'What daily newspaper do you read?' In some of the interviews I conducted, I decided to record the responses to this particular question in order to examine the degree of standard answer (irrespective of truth etc. - treated only as their response to what I might receive favourably). Out of 44 candidates in the period used (one month and concerning 'managerial' positions only) 27 replied, 'the Daily Telegraph'. If however the sample is adjusted to remove raw graduates, leaving only those who have actually previously been successful on the interview rounds, the number replying Daily Telegraph then represents 22 out of 28. The other six were divided between 3 Financial Times', 2 Guardians, and 1 Yorkshire Post. A fairly conforming bunch. Of course that sample is not presented as a 'rigorous piece of survey research', since there are all kinds of intervening variables - such as reading the Daily Telegraph because it is the 'Jobs Newspaper',

rather than because it is the newspaper to read for 'executives'. It does however give some idea of the factors at work in the symbolic infrastructure, not least indicated by the fact that the interviewer felt it of some relevance to what was going on around him. And so the symbols communicate!

'Come and be headhunted for real!'

(Manager at Wenslow
Manufacturing Co.)

This chapter has examined some of the rituals prevalent in the organisations concerned, and has suggested that such rituals whether conceived as empty or positive, are at the heart of the means by which asymmetrical relationships are maintained, and the symbolic permanence of the structure of domination acquired. The chapter has presented a selective emphasis upon the 'darker' side of organisational life. This has been undertaken simply to rescue such factors from oblivion, and the concentration of incidents which has produced a telescopic effect should not be regarded as anything other than a specifically restricted account of certain aspects of the way of life.

In the following chapter further aspects of the symbolic reinforcement are examined in an analysis of the way in which the existence of asymmetrical relationships is institutionalised.

INSTITUTIONALISING CONTROL

Up to this point the emphasis of the thesis has been upon establishing the importance of symbolic factors, such as evidenced in structures of domination, in theories of power in organisations. It would however be a somewhat extreme structuralist position to argue that structure was exclusively determining of social action, and indeed in the preceding chapter it is evident that 'agency' is also a prime consideration in, for instance the shape of the Managing Director of Wenslow Manufacturing Co. The extent to which the Managing Director interprets and constructs constraints (as exemplified for instance in manifestations of the structure of domination) is a representation of the import of 'agency'.

Lukes¹ in confronting the problem of the relationship between 'agency' (power) and 'constraints' (structure) has argued that there are three clear-cut positions which can be adopted towards the issue. One can take a voluntarist position which views constraints as minimal upon choice-making agents. Lukes cites Sartre and Popper as examples of this alternative in that they view constraints as essentially constructed by agents themselves, and that it is possible to break from such constraints at any time - by heroism in the case of Sartre, and optimism in the case of Popper.² One can alternatively take a structuralist position in which constraints are viewed as inexorably determined independently of agents. Althusser and Poulantzas are cited as examples of this alternative, with Althusser emphasising

particularly the determining nature of the relations of production, and Poulantzas emphasising the relation between social classes.³

Such Marxist positions argues Lukes, treat the problematic of agents as subjects as irrelevant.⁴

A third alternative is described by Lukes as relativist. In this position different points of view are accepted on the grounds that there is no way to decide between them. There is no possibility of appealing to evidence to resolve the issue, in this perspective, for any piece of evidence will already be interpreted from within a particular problematic.⁵

Lukes suggests however that all three alternative positions are unsatisfactory since they all fail to address the very problem at issue (the relation between power and structure). They fail to address the problem by defining it out of existence. The first position argues Lukes, denies that there are structures, the second position denies that there are agents, and the third position refuses to relate them to one another. He proposes in this context that concerns should be with developing rational argument ('which is possible') and assembling evidence ('which can be brought to bear').⁶

There are some problems with Lukes' terminologies, in particular with structure (and structuralism - although he does appear to concur with Boudon that such a term can only be approached through the context in which it is employed)⁷ and with power (which is accepted as an 'essentially contested' concept, but used generally to refer to the ability of agents to act in relation to constraints).⁸ His schema

does however accord with the idea of an emerging epistemology (although as I have previously argued I would contend that such a formulation precludes the possibility of relativism - at least in the more accepted form conceived as an obstacle to generalised scientific thought).

In this chapter I propose to take the interplay between agency (the extent to which the Wenslow Managing Director's more bizarre actions - as viewed by myself - are a function of that particular Managing Director) and constraint (the constituted historical and societal contextual structure of domination - which is not to subscribe to a view that structure is necessarily 'constraining', quite clearly it may also be seen to be 'enabling') as essentially dynamic, but to argue that the elucidation of the interplay has traditionally been tilted in one direction (witness the preponderance of interpersonal accounts referred to in chapter six) and that this tilting is influenced by the very process which enables members (and particularly some members) to legitimate their actions/interpretations/constructions. The tilting is of course once again the result of the treatment of the everyday world as obvious and part of 'what everyone knows'.

To re-establish a balance then it is necessary to examine the making-possible of action such as that attributed to the Managing Director (and defined by me as bizarre) in the preceding chapter. This making-possible is surely the interplay between agency and constraint, in that the Managing Director of Wenslow does not act in an agency vacuum, just as surely as he does not act according to a cobol programme. It is not therefore meaningful to address agency (eg. the quirks of a particular Managing Director) in isolation from the making-

possible of such agency. Indeed my comparative experience would suggest that such isolated addressing would be to construct a theory of 'organisational quirks', since for instance 'legitimated bizarreness' at Wenslow could be reproduced en-block at Fielding and Co. and pass as normal. The fact that such a transfer could probably not be accomplished with the same ease at North Midlands Board, is to emphasise the importance of both agency and structure, and not to simply confirm the quirkiness of the Managing Director of Wenslow. Neither is such an argument, moreover, to deny the quirkiness.

Part of the legitimising process was addressed in chapter seven in the examination of myth, and a brief reference was made to the relationship between myth and ideology. The distinction made by for instance Sorel, that myths are indestructible because they change by virtue of their own vagueness, whereas ideologies are surpassed because they have a fixed quality due to their rational characteristics,⁹ was rejected. In this chapter, the idea that ideologies have rational characteristics¹⁰ will in fact be reconstituted as the idea of ideologies forming part of the infrastructure underlying the accountable nature of everyday life. The quirkiness is then reconstituted as a part of the accounting for being a Managing Director - bizarreness being simply (albeit special for the nature of this thesis) a different definition of the situation.

It may nevertheless be useful to rescue the historical component in Sorel's argument by concurrently reconstituting Levi-Strauss' idea of history transforming myth into mythology¹¹ (for overt story-telling myths) into a framework for viewing the historical transformation of myth into ideology (for covert depoliticising myths of the kind

examined in chapter seven). Such a formulation would align with treatment of ideology in much of the literature as constituting a representation of institutionalised belief, whilst retaining a dimension of 'institutionalised unawareness'. Furthermore such a schema also aligns with the notion of a knowledge-in-consequence developed in chapter three. The ensuing appropriation (or misappropriation) of concepts by members/social scientists - the slippage of the double hermeneutic - is evidenced, as ideologies are incorporated and reinforced by the very forces which might purport to expose them (ie. managerial academics who treat the nature of management as in some way given).

As suggested, the concept of ideology has been treated extensively in the literature. Mannheim in his seminal work, 'Ideology and Utopia', for instance provides an interesting early link with the idea of domination, by locating the concept in the reflection of ruling groups thinking becoming so intensively interest-bound that they are no longer able to see certain things which would undermine their sense of domination.

'There is implicit in the word 'ideology' the insight that in certain situations the collective unconscious of certain groups obscures the real condition of society both to itself and to others and thereby stabilizes it.'

12

The idea of a 'collective unconscious' and a 'real' situation resurrects the contentious Marxist concept of false consciousness referred to in chapter four, and again this might profitably be replaced by Bourdieu's notion of avoiding consciousness. Such a refinement can concurrently be accommodated in the more positive idea

of legitimising rather than the negative formulation or obscuring.

Thus for instance Giddens has suggested that:

'All societies having some degree of stability of structure develop such ideological systems which service to 'rationalize' the lines of domination-subordination in society and thereby cohere the social structure.'¹³

In this context the idea of legitimise is surely contained in the notion of 'rationalise', the making-possible (of the action of agency) is reinforced by being presented as logical.

More directly linking the concept of ideology to the work situation, Anthony has traced the antecedents of what he refers to as a 'modern ideology of work'.¹⁴ Commencing with an examination of classical Greece he argues that work was not then taken seriously, and was in fact subordinated to the ends of 'use, beauty and happiness'.¹⁵ As economic man came to be constructed involving the propounding of the ideas of the protestant ethic,¹⁶ (a contemporary version of an ancient ethos) and the division of labour,¹⁷ an 'official ideology' came to be developed. This official ideology, argues Anthony, located essentially in the ideas of laissez-faire and self-help, has developed into an ethical code in which the human element is manipulated as though it were a piece of machinery.¹⁸ The morality of the protestant ethic and the logic of the division of labour, which justified the form of developing organisation, have thus been supplanted by a self-justifying (self-evident and cure-all) ideology. Such an ideology is so pervasive, and articulated partly overtly and partly covertly (ie. in symbols) as to be able to sustain at least some degree of respectability to arguments proposing that ideology

is ended - so obvious is the work ethic.¹⁹

Such an argument reinforces the idea of control being reproduced as a structure of domination, but again this is not to suggest a total domination. As Nichols and Beynon have suggested.

'People may be used as machines but they are not the mechanical products of the forces that have fashioned them. In spite of the inequality, the exploitation, the media, workers do not exist as totally conditioned social beings. They make something out of what they've got.'²⁰

What they make of it however is made within the overall interplay between constraints and agency, and although managers may traditionally be regarded as having more agency than constraints, when the actual milieu is examined the picture changes, and in the above quotation for instance one might read managers for workers.

Role drift, discussed in chapter seven is one way of making-out,²¹ which managers use to circumvent apparent constraints. The most illuminating example of this I really feel unable to report, since it is just conceivable that circumstances could be traced with dire consequences for those involved, but suffice it to say by way of illustration that the action involved some people in drifting their roles far beyond legally (ie. by employment contract definitions) sustainable limits. Another example is evidenced in the drift of the Personnel Director of Wenslow Manufacturing Co. into a frequent and obsessive concern with minute details of the Company pension scheme, to the detriment of what the managers reporting to him would refer to as 'the real problems around here'.

Such drift is obviously a demonstration of agency and seems even to be a reaction to constraints rather than permitted action within such constraints. The interplay is thus used by managers (as members) to construct a version of agency which can be sustained within constraints as interpreted. Although such interpretation and demonstration of agency is in itself a manifestation of the institutionalising of control (involving an asymmetrical distribution of ability to define situations) it is in the counterposing collective officialisation of constraint that ideology operates most pervasively. The ideology of 'managerialism',²² can in fact be seen to be founded in belief (with derivations in the right to manage etc, historically abstracted) but constituted in everyday life according to perspective. Ideology thereby sustains constraints against which agency is in tension. Management thus, although constituted in a 'specific occupational ideology',²³ is in practice enacted in a shifting paradoxical and ambiguous arena bounded by the interplay between agency (interpretation, eg. drift, quirkiness) and constraint (ideology etc.). Furthermore, the concentration upon the positive aspects of ideology (ie. constituted as belief) by writers such as Anthony, Nichols, and Dunkerley as described, has masked the perhaps even more pervasive aspect of ideology in the negative dimensions. As Larrain²⁴ has suggested it is these negative dimensions (as constituted in unawareness) that ideological foreclosures create distortions (in the sense of presenting partialities as though they were totalities).

The extent to which constraints are perceived to be enforced is obviously a key consideration in the interplay argument, and of course ideology is a potent means of enforcement in itself, containing its own self-justification. The way in which 'managerial' is reified

into 'organisation' is a good example. The technique of management by objectives (MbO) relies largely upon the idea of enabling individuals to identify and execute their own contribution to 'organisational objectives', which masks the constitution of such objectives as for instance, 'dominant coalition objectives'. A recent working party report into the organisation of benefits payment by the DHSS, declared that MbO should be introduced as soon as possible in order to 'substitute self-management for management by domination'. The idea of the involvement of individuals in planning their own objectives in relation to 'organisational objectives' is considered to be self-management, underlining the way in which concepts become incorporated into ideological positions, and certain definitions get reinforced. 'Might makes right', as Gouldner's argument²⁵ about power and morality being brought into equilibrium, is coined by Hyman.²⁶

A further limitation on agency is likely to occur in what O'Day has called intimidation rituals,²⁷ whereby individuals are pressed to conform, or defined as deviant. Such rituals of control argues O'Day, generally have two phases, the first of which involves indirect intimidation such as nullification (eg. assurances given to a subordinate that his suggestions are invalid) and isolation (eg. separating the subordinate from his peers). The second phase however involves direct intimidation such as defamation (eg. impugning the subordinate's character) and expulsion. Such rituals were certainly to be found at Wenslow Manufacturing Co. where expulsions would almost always be prefaced by at the very least, the defamation phase where peer groups would receive anticipatory socialisation in the form of, clear indications from superiors that the condemned man wasn't 'up to his job.'

'Have you read 1984? well that's what its like all bloody "double think." '

(Manager at Wenslow
Manufacturing Co.)

Constraints at Wenslow were thus quite often reproduced as fear, but expulsion can take on different forms. At Fielding and Co. expulsion itself became part of the isolation process, where individuals identified as condemned were detached from any important work, given all the nasty jobs, and consistently leaned on. At North Midlands Board on the other hand condemned men would be stripped of rank (have their job redefined) or would be sent to the Russian Front (be transferred to another District). In both the latter cases expulsion is thus transformed into resignation, as the isolation and redefinitions become intolerable. All this has continued unabated throughout the period of changing employment legislation (eg. Employment Protection Act 1974) the costs of any tribunals being accepted as one of the hazards of 'our insane society' and adverse publicity being rationalised as nine-day-wonders. The very mechanisms of employee protection can thus be ideologically transformed and used as examples of the need to reinforce control if the task of management (as ideologically constituted) is not to become altogether impossible in such a hostile environment!

'The Big Nurse tends to get real put out if something keeps her outfit from running like a smooth, accurate, precision made machine. The slightest thing messy or out of kilter or in the way, ties her into a little white knot of tight - smiled fury Under her rule the ward Inside is almost completely adjusted to surroundings And I've watched her get more and more skilful over the years. Practice has steadied and strengthened her until now she wields a

-- sure power that extends in all directions
on hairlike wires.....'

(Ken Kesey, One Flew over the
Cuckoo's Nest).

The importance of the interplay between agency and constraints was further illuminated by an opportunity presented to interview several Industrial Relations Practitioners about the nature of their jobs. The work from which this illumination emerged²⁸ was carried out for an Inter-Board Study Group formed from several Industrial Training Boards and substantively involved assessing the reaction of various IR Practitioners to a systems model, with a view to the Study Group developing a comprehensive model for use in generating understanding of industrial relations. It was envisaged that such a model would be used by Training Board Advisers to analyse client Companies' industrial relations, and also be incorporated into Board training programmes carried out for their various client Companies.

Of course systems views of the world are essentially entrenched in pluralist ideology, in that competing interest groups are represented as impacting upon 'the organisation' from either an internal or external environment position. The particular model developed by this Study Group was no exception, being a typical concentric-circles variation. The colleague with whom I carried out this work and myself were agreed that we should approach respondents in an unstructured interview with the Study Group's model only being introduced towards the end of each session. Such a procedure was designed to give a more severe test to the model, by allowing us access to data from which we could make interpretations concerning some of the ideological bases in respondents positions, revealed in the extent to which they tried to reformulate

or integrate their responses to the model when presented, in relation to what had gone before.

We thus began each interview by asking respondents how they saw their jobs (eg. 'What do you do?', 'What is the nature of your job?', 'What is industrial relations?') and the subsequent analysis centred upon the treatment of respondents talk as constituting accounts of how they conceptualised their jobs. In that such persuasive accounts inevitably omit certain features, producing what Garfinkel has called a 'gloss',²⁹ the analysis aimed to link such 'glossing' to the reformulations/integrations, on presenting the model, and thereby provide more indication of underlying ideologies. Talk was thus conceived as being partly constructed according to (ideological) 'scripts'.

The selection of respondents was a two stage process. Firstly the Training Adviser of one of the Training Boards concerned, made contact with people whom he thought would be receptive in companies of which he had experience. Having obtained agreement in principle he then left us to negotiate firm entry and develop other required contacts within the companies. Twelve people in total in five organisations were interviewed, and these consisted of, one Managing Director (who had decided to take direct responsibility for industrial relations himself), two Personnel Directors, four Industrial Relations/Personnel Managers, two 'Line' Managers, one Works Convenor, and three Shop Stewards. The Companies had work forces ranging from 400 to 5,000 and all were highly 'unionised'.

The responses of the people interviewed were taken down in note form and written up as soon as possible afterwards. The analysis was

started with the debriefing after the first interview and was continued throughout the period of the remaining interviews (about six weeks in total) and continued to emerge during the subsequent period of writing a report for the client.

The ideological bases of the ways in which respondents conceptualised their jobs were analysed in relation to unitary and pluralist perspectives,³⁰ and in relation to the way in which power was implied. As might be expected, a fundamental difference between the underlying bases of the Managers (in this context including Directors) and the Shop Stewards was identified, but the way in which the underlying bases of managers perspectives seemed to operate at two levels was most significant. The two levels seemed to be such that the presenting framework (or apparent perspective) clearly subsumed an underlying perspective, but both these positions tended to be subverted whenever managerial respondents were challenged hard, resulting in retreat to a contradictory fall back position.

Managers tended to present a view of the world as essentially pluralist ('My job is to help to avoid loss-of-face disputes') in which competing interests have to be resolved by compromise, but this was clearly underlain by a deeper unitary view of the world ('You wouldn't think of it as a battleground when you see the Personnel Director as Santa Claus and the Chief Shop Stewards as reindeer at the childrens Christmas party' - domination even in enchantment!). This underlying unitary view (whether seen as, 'we are all pulling in the same direction' or as, 'I wish we were all pulling in the same direction - because we should be') was seen to be underlain by an even deeper perspective, which was only revealed when pushed, and contradicted the more surface

views of the world. The Managers' retreat position involves a power perspective in which power has to be related to managerial notions of responsibility ('You cannot have Worker Directors, it is impossible to be a member of the Board with all its responsibilities and still represent the workers, there is a conflict of interests - the two sides of industry - there will always be wide differences') in which power seems to be conceived as legitimated by identification with (managerially defined) responsibility.

'In confirming the reinstatement you are reminded of an individual's responsibility at work as laid down in the Industrial Relations Code of Practice, paragraph 18, "The individual employee has obligations, to his employer, to his Trade Union, if he belongs to one, and to his fellow employees. He shares responsibility for the state of Industrial Relations in the establishment where he works and his attitude and conduct can have a decisive influence on them".'

(Extract from a reinstatement letter to an employee previously suspended)

Power is thus brought into equilibrium with morality (being-responsible). The following piece of illustrative material taken from the field notes demonstrates this bringing into equilibrium of being-responsible and possessing power. The material, which concerns an account given by the Managing Director of a company employing some 5,000 people, in response to being pushed by myself to explain what he meant by saying that 'the unions have all the power', also further illuminates the interplay between agency and constraint.

SCENARIO

'Well of course I don't have any power.'

'You don't have any power?'

'I don't have any power.'

'Why?'

'The Unions have all the power.'

'Why is that?'

'They have power but without responsibility.'

'In what way?'

'They have no responsibility no responsibility for for getting out the product, and yet they can stop production at the drop of a hat.'

'But what about the power of the status quo?'

'What do you mean?'

'Well you talk as though power is something which only has an existence when it is expressed dynamically, what about power which is just just held?'

'You talk as though as though power can be held like having a hand which is strong in spades - but what use is that if spades are not trumps?' The Managing Director looked triumphant.

'If as you say then, the Unions are so powerful, and yet do not have responsibility, why doesn't the whole system collapse in anarchy?' I persisted.

'Ah, well, some unions are responsible.'

'Do you consider the union representation in your company to be responsible then?'

'They know that they have to be careful they remember that we closed one of our plants down a couple of years ago.'

'How did you close one of your plants down, if you don't have any power?'

'..... er well yes, thats the power of the market isn't it?'

Responsibility (as being-responsible) is thus given the status of morality, and agency is denied, firstly being attributed as subject to the constraint of 'the imorality of some', and then (when pushed) being switched to the haven of all capitalist ideology (the super-ideology) - the market place!

Shop Stewards alternatively tended to have a presenting position which reflected dominant pluralist ideology ('Negotiation is about both sides getting something of what they want') in which competing interests were presented as resolvable. This was clearly, however, underlain by a power perspective ('It's "Goodbye" for the next ten years if they con us') in which responsibility is constituted as being-straight on 'our' terms. It would seem that much more agency is attributed to managers here than managers themselves were prepared to account for, and indeed managerial ideology of trade union power is highlighted - which is perhaps why we could never get the meaning of 'Goodbye' articulated.

'I was angry with my friend:
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe:
I told it not, my wrath did grow.'

(William Blake, A Poison Tree)

The work carried out in industrial relations also further illuminated the importance of historical and societal context in considerations of power in organisations, in the confusions generated by systems views representing history, society and indeed power as factors which impinge upon industrial relations.

In discussing the historical component in industrial relations, many respondents said that they felt that history was an important factor and should be located as an external environmental influence on the model. Others said that this was unsatisfactory, and that the history of the Organisation was so important that historical factors should be considered in relation to the development of industrial relations within the Company as an internal environmental influence.

Both of these perspectives miss some of the essential nature of the import of history in industrial relations. The first perspective suggests that societal history, affects what happens in industrial relations, whereas the question of the extent to which societal history determines the nature of industrial relations needs to be addressed. The historical development of organisations as means of attaining perceived economic advantages (ie. structures for achieving economic ends by supposed economies of scale) and therefore the very essence of societal structures of domination is a central facet of the nature of industrial relations. Indeed the system-of-rules view of industrial relations is a view which masks the possibility of such a view constituting in itself a means of maintaining existing structures of domination in organisations, and therefore, in society. Further, the second perspective, seeking to consider history as an internal environmental factor, suggests that organisational history can be considered as contextually divorced from the society in which the organisation exists. This has the effect of compounding the confusion by limiting the historical considerations and neglecting the very factors (such as the development of specialisation and the division of labour) which constitute the structure of domination, and hence the very *raison d'etre* of industrial relations.

Similar confusions were noted in respondents views when power in industrial relations was raised explicitly. There was a tendency to view power as something which impacted upon the system whereas it is clearly underlined in some of their comments (generally a managerial denial of power, eg. 'The Unions have all the power...') that power constitutes the very essence of industrial relations.

'Wenslow Manufacturing Co's crack football team were all set for a Continental kick-off in Bilbao this weekend, but it looks as though a strike at the firm's works has put them offside with the management a letter dropped through the letterboxes of the players saying that in the present circumstances the trip was off.

One of the members of the team, who does not want to be quoted said, "Only a fortnight ago the firm had told football team officials that the strike would not make any difference to the trip.

"Many of us have got our pounds changed into pesetas".'

(Wenslow Evening News, 20.4.78)

In fact with both power and history it is useful to ideologically rescue the concepts by locating them analytically in Simmel's diadic/triadic theoretical framework.³¹ It is apparent then that a systems view of industrial relations encourages a triadic representation of power (and history) as being something external which impacts upon industrial relations, whereas a diadic representation is more meaningful. An industrial relations relationship in other words, is a power relationship - is a historical relationship. The representation as a triadic relationship (no doubt in the guise of addressing complexity) thus ideologically masks the essential simplicity of the dimensions (at least that is, in terms of their derivations).

Ideological transformation and incorporation is thus at the heart of the process of institutionalising control. Structures of relations are perpetuated and legitimised by continual affirmation of belief. Knowledge of everyday life is conceived as experiential, and the very means of transcending this corruption, is closed off paradoxically by this limited conception (social science conceived as only knowledge from experience, hypothesised and validated).

The role of ideology in the institutionalising of asymmetrical relations has been examined in this chapter, and it has been suggested that the industrial relations arena, indeed the very existence of 'industrial relations' is a potent example of the way in which the structure of domination is legitimised. It has further been argued in this chapter that the operation of agency (the way in which individuals structure their own worlds) in relation to constraint (the way in which the structure of domination for instance is 'accepted!') is also a significant factor in the institutionalising of asymmetrical relations. In the final chapter some of these diverse strands of the symbolic infrastructure are brought together, and an examination of some of the implications is undertaken.

CONCLUSIONS

'Research now gets deflected in new directions, new kinds of instruments are built, "evidence" is related to theories in new ways until there arises an ideology that is rich enough to provide independent arguments for any particular part of it and mobile enough to find such arguments whenever they seem to be required.'

(Paul Feyerabend, Against Method)

This thesis has been concerned with formulating an approach to understanding some of the symbolic aspects of organisational life with particular respect to power, and to an examination of some of the problems of knowledge encountered in carrying out such a programme. It has been suggested that the symbolic examples put forward can be viewed as manifestations of power, and the problem of identifying power has been approached through a homonymic stance. Further it has been suggested that the approach to illuminating the submerged world can only be achieved if epistemology and methodology are approached as problematic, and that because so much work does not do that, symbolic aspects have not received much attention, at least with respect to power.

Accordingly a means of proceeding has been developed which has involved making interpretations of the symbolic world, using everyday accounts of members - in this case managers of organisations. Thus the problem of second order constructs has been addressed, and an argument developed in which analysts interpretations of members accounts are conceived as an expansion of the 'form of life' (grounded

in the reduction of incomprehension) by constructing formulations of experience from the various 'ways of life' of members (ie. in this case, the day to day accomplishment of the job of being a manager).

The review of some of the ways in which sociology has traditionally been conceived has highlighted the essentially problematic nature of carrying out social analysis. The conception of a science of society as a culmination of the scientific enterprise, in manifesting the problems of science inherent in traditional conceptions of natural science, has tended to divert from the overriding necessity to formulate and expand upon experience of social life, which appears to be so much a part of the human condition. Conceptions of sociology which concentrate upon the generating of theory have similarly resulted in a large number of attempts to produce general schemas (involving 'generalisable' results). Notwithstanding an apparently insatiable human desire to produce general frameworks for understanding, the energy expended in pursuing work derived from bases with over-emphasised 'scientific' status has masked the view that such energy is itself an expression of the inevitability of human formulation of experience.

Moreover, reactions against 'over-scientific' frameworks which have attempted to create alternatives have often been restricted by a concentration upon establishing a conception which is substantially different from science. Consequently, effort to produce general schemas has been dismissed as undesirable, or even pointless. The attempt to capture the essence of the inevitability of formulation of experience is then lost, and energy expended is conceived in isolation from effort to reduce incomprehension, as aesthetic and/or entertaining

in its own right.

The historical separation of sociology and philosophy has further restricted the treatment of problems of carrying out social analysis, since such a separation rests in large part on the idea that the problems of sociology with respect to the way in which basic epistemological questions are to be settled, has been clarified so as to produce a discipline which can be pursued substantively. Problems of what is to count as knowledge however are manifestly not settled, and notwithstanding the idea that it may never be possible to settle such problems, life - and the formulation of and expansion upon experience - has to proceed.

The procedure developed in the thesis, based upon the interpretation of members accounts of how they construct the accomplishment of everyday life, has glossed over the problems that would be undoubtedly presented to a researcher entering an organisation to collect accounts of this nature. This has been done on the assumption that the dynamics of an 'outsider' are lessened for a manager actually emerging as researcher. Although not entirely as simple as that (for instance, someone must surely at sometime have wondered, 'why is he scribbling on the back of that tea-mat?') this has enabled a concentration upon epistemological issues rather than methodological issues to be achieved. Which leads to the question of what has epistemologically been achieved?

This question is perhaps best approached by a recapitulation of the concerns described at the outset of the thesis. In particular I suggested in chapter one that I had a concern, stemming from my

thoughts about Mrs. Pendlebury and her capacity for accounting for tarantulas, with the possibility of any knowledge about the social world. It seems to me that in the course of this thesis it has been suggested that knowledge of social life is possible, but that the procedure developed is far from grounded in an absolute framework. There is no formula for achieving knowledge, and the argument which decreases the sovereignty of the writer (as observer) with respect to the incorporation into, or rejection from, existing corpuses of knowledge, and resurrects the reader from passivity, also prevents declarations of finality, and rescues conclusions from pre-occupation with evaluation.

It is nevertheless possible to declare that the issues in the course of constructing the thesis, have reinforced my determination to continue pursuing the formulation and expansion of experience, as manifesting the search for knowledge about social life, even though questions about the contribution made (from general questions such as, 'Has knowledge been advanced?' to the more specific, 'Has the way of life been captured?') are not questions which can be approached in isolation from a 'reading' of the text.

The question of whether power was a good vehicle for the explication of the way of life of managers is again part of that same relationship between reader and writer, but a story about one particular reader may reinforce the appropriateness of power as a concept in this context.

The story concerns a manager with whom I had maintained contact during the writing of this thesis, and on presenting him with some of the manuscript to read to see whether or not he could identify with the

argument, he muttered affirmative words and related the following incident presumably as means of illustrating his understanding of the issues raised.

The incident concerned the Board of Directors in the company in which he worked, and an annual dinner which had recently taken place. The manager related how he had for some time thought that something strange was taking place with one particular Director. He could not really identify what it was, but there was certainly something odd. At that dinner for instance, the Director had been faced with having to telephone for a taxi at the end of the evening, since the company cars which had been sent to take home the Directors had room for only five out of six of the Directors and their wives. The manager repeated how strange that had seemed to him at the time, and in fact rather than see the Director telephone for a taxi, the manager had taken him home in his car. Three days later, a notice was placed on the company notice boards informing everyone that the Director concerned had been replaced. 'Is that the kind of thing you mean?' the manager laughed. (Power is never having to say you are sorry!) Such is the institutionalising of asymmetrical relationships.

Thus one reader seemed to grasp the nature of the argument for symbolic manifestations of power, but since his familiarity with the literature of power in organisations would probably be minimal, that is perhaps not too significant in relation to my presenting conceptualisation as a discrepancy between the literature and my experience.

The discrepancy conception arising then, from a perception of a gap

between my experience and what theories of power in organisations 'had to say', led to a criticism of the incompleteness of theories as propounded in the literature, and an identification of this incompleteness with the reliance upon the everyday world of members common-sense assumptions as a resource (as part of what 'everyone knows') rather than as concurrently a topic for investigation. It was suggested that this has led to the identification of, and an inordinate treatment of, observable factors to the detriment of submerged factors.

This thesis has therefore concentrated on the submerged aspects and particularly on the part played by myth, ritual and ideology, in the generation and reinforcement of managers assumptions about the right to manage, and the transformation of the right into a duty epitomised in the idea of the sovereignty of management. In concentrating upon one aspect of the symbolic infrastructure (concerning the reinforcing of asymmetrical relations constituting a structure of domination) the way has been cleared for further study of organisations in this framework. Furthermore, the encompassing of several concepts (myth/ritual/ideology) with which to illuminate this one aspect, it has been possible to give only the merest indication of the significance of such concepts for the study of organisation. A great deal remains for the development of the treatment of each concept in this context, and for the study of the relationships between the concepts (eg. witness the wide attention given to the relationship and interaction, between myth and ritual by social anthropologists). Perhaps after all this thesis has really been addressing aspects of culture analogous to aspects of the person which have come to be regarded as psychological disturbances!

The specific investigation of the relationship between conceptions of science and the place of science in society, to the symbolic superstructure of organisational life is another potent area for future research. It seems inconceivable that the dominant conceptions of doing science should be coincidental to the dominant mode of doing organising, and in this thesis it has been possible to only touch upon such issues.

The concentration upon the submerged aspects of organisational life and the postulation that such factors can be conceived as manifestations of power, raises the question of the relationship between the framework developed in this thesis and traditional theories of power. In that for instance, exchange theories, behavioural theories, and strategic contingencies theories of power provide a formulation of observable aspects, then the relationship is one of different perspective and therefore this exposition could be regarded as an addition to the literature. Conceiving the relationship in this way rests upon certain assumptions about the relationship between the observable and the submerged and their relative epistemologies, which perhaps is an even more significant question.

Certainly the distinction between the observable and the submerged is problematic, if only from the view that if something is not observable, how is it possible to know that it is there? That problem could in fact be said to be the positivist trap, since no matter how one may try to transcend identification of restricting images, in formulating and expanding upon social life, one has to use words, make statements, and discriminate entities. Thus the description of the submerged world as an 'it' or 'thing' encapsulates the positivist trap. It is of course

always possible to avoid the trap for any concept in isolation. It would be possible therefore to reconstitute the above reference to the submerged as 'the factors which manifest the idea of being submerged'. This circumvents the problem for the term 'submerged' by converting submerged into an idea rather than a thing, but all that has been achieved is to transfer the problem of the positivist trap to 'the factors' (which manifest the idea). The positivist trap is like a bottomless net that will of necessity catch everything - eventually.

This potentially crippling problem is only paralysing, nevertheless, if we insist upon some form of absolute consistency, which would involve not only defining every term as we went along (an alienating process) but also formulating ideas such that the net of the positivist trap was always kept at least one square behind us, obviously an impossible mission. That is not to suggest however that one should not be rigorous in the selection and meaning of terms used, but is to suggest that in investigating certain concepts, other terms must of necessity be accepted as in some way given. In investigating the concept of power in this thesis for instance, the term 'organisation' has been accepted as sufficiently invested with common sense meaning as to not pose an insurmountable problem to the investigation of power.

The term organisation is of course far from unproblematic, but the pursuit of that specific problem in the context of the thesis would detract from the emphasis on power, notwithstanding that the nature of organisation is such that any investigation of power must per se, illuminate the concept of organisation. The essentially contestable nature of the question, 'who is to count as a manager?' (and what

is a 'member') is a further example of this problem.

The question of the internal consistency of a thesis then, is much more a problem of ensuring that the thesis is coherent, in terms of pursuing directions which have been indicated, and producing a readable, reasonably flowing argument, rather than a problem of closely defining all terms introduced and of ensuring that all the definitions interlock. The interlocking must detract from the pursuit of meaning, to the extent that meaning is so often contained in ambiguity. Again this is not to suggest that refinement and the removal of obviously confusing duality of meaning is not necessary - such an argument would be to miss the point. The issue is that ambiguity is an inevitable part of social life particularly constituted in symbols, and that the interpretation of the symbolic infrastructure is also subject to the essential ambiguity.

Thus my interpretation of the fact that Directors at Wenslow Manufacturing Co. always go to lunch fifteen minutes after everyone else, yet always return thirty minutes after everyone else, as reinforcing the structure of domination, would probably be quite different from any second order constructs which a Director (as emerging analyst) may erect - but neither precludes the other. Discrimination between accounts is the essence of tradition in the development of corpuses of knowledge.

In this thesis then the degree of coherency is a representation of the relationship between the submerged (to the extent that this forms a meaningful formulation for the reader) and the observable (in the extent to which that meaningful formulation relates to the readers

orientation to the observable propositions). Thus the extent to which this thesis has resulted in additions to other theories of power in organisations is an expression of that same relationship.

The idea expressed above, of a Director erecting second order constructs highlights the problem of differentiating between member and social analyst. Such a distinction is not static of course, but in this context the suggestion is to locate the differentiation in the degree of emphasis, and envisage a Director who emerged as more concerned with analysis-qua-analysis of the way of life of a Director, than with accomplishing competent membership as a Director.

A great deal has been said in this thesis about the implications for carrying out social analysis, and to the extent that this concerns the formulation and expansion of experience, conceptualised as the developing form of life, that is significant in itself. It will be useful nevertheless to say something about the implications of the thesis in general. This can be done by relating the arguments to one of the central facets of industrial life currently popularly believed to present serious problems - industrial relations.

If for instance social life in industrial organisations is so much encompassed by a symbolic infrastructure which tends to result in reinforcement of asymmetrical relationships, what is the future of industrial relations, and more particularly what are the implications for supposed forces towards greater industrial democratisation?

To attempt to assess the future of industrial relations without locating the discussion in the past is to abstract from the very

nature of industrial relations, and the reason why 'industrial relations' exist. An examination of what has come to be called 'industrial relations' in the context of this thesis poses a construction of asymmetrical relations derived from a specific historically conceived way of organisation. The asymmetry is concealed in the neglect of the symbolic manifestations of power-held (the power of the status quo - which does not need to be continually expressed) and the over-emphasis upon power-enacted (eg. withdrawal of labour - which masks the real asymmetry of long-term power).

Any attempt to democratise in real terms is therefore faced with a fundamental re-conception of organisation in relation to the hegemonic structure of asymmetrical relations, and proposals which do not consider this basis can only result in further legitimisation of the asymmetrical structure.

The implications of this are illuminated in this thesis by concentrating upon managers, thereby demonstrating that the results of such historical foreclosure of the derivation of structures of asymmetrical relations produces all the symptoms so often demonstrated as undesirable (dysfunctional etc), amongst the 'managers' - and not just the 'workers'.

Although the thesis has not specifically examined the somewhat tenuous distinction between 'workers' and 'managers' (and has in fact relied upon an intentionally simplistic delineation of, some work - some manage, in order to emphasise a neglect in theories of power in organisations) it has nevertheless highlighted some of the problems of such a distinction, and pointed to a further area for future

research. The failure to develop a 'factory class consciousness' is often identified as evidence of the limitation of Marxist perspectives on organisations, whereas the fragility of distinctions between 'managers' and 'workers' (in that even 'managers' can be seen to be dominated) may be viewed as a demonstration of the potency of such perspectives. The way in which managers are possessed by a continual barrage of contradictory feelings of commitment and opposition, far from being evidence of disproof of a Marxist account, is a manifestation of the essential hegemony (the continual reinforcement and institutionalisation of corporatist hierarchic legitimisation) of organisational life. The investigation of such contradictions and tenuous distinctions, and the relationship to the plausibility of distinctions between Marxist 'liberation' and 'explanatory' perspectives, must surely be fruitful for organisation theory.

It is not necessary to indulge in idealistic and utopian visions of liberation or egalitarianism to envisage a movement towards a consideration of derivation as a commencement of a debate on alternative futures for organisation and therefore industrial relations. Yet the symbolic mechanisms act to prevent a movement such as this. Are we therefore trapped in a vicious circle? Obviously the impact of this thesis is to suggest that we are, but equally the circle could never be completely watertight, or such a thesis would not be possible.

The way in which Jack Fisher let 'them' know that he was a good Manager ('on the ball') by feeding information through the 'secret drawer', certainly exemplifies this circle and underlines the manner in which asymmetrical relationships acquire and maintain 'symbolic

permanence'. The sending of such messages is inculcated into the way of life, but the explication of such factors of the way of life constitutes in itself a way out from the circle, although the importance of one such discourse is probably minute in isolation.

The original question of why I was being paralysed in my action research role has been illuminated by the examination of the symbolic infrastructure, and obviously an awareness of the implications of the manifestations of hierarchy is paramount for any action research intervention. The extent to which any such intervention will be subject to paralysis is not determinable prior to entry, but it does raise the question of how specific is the examination undertaken in this thesis, to the organisations concerned, and particularly to Wenslow Manufacturing Co. Only further accounts can really begin to establish this, but my own experience would suggest that although there will be some specific factors (eg. as might be attributable specifically to 'industrial' organisations, or possibly to organisations 'in the North of England') most of the analysis will have some meaning for others.

One direction for the future therefore must lie in the production of many more accounts, preferably from a variety of theoretical positions (semiology, linguistics etc in addition to more traditional approaches), as means of expanding the form of life.

The symbolic manifestations of power then constitute one arena for such an expansion of the form of life, and the investigation of the criteria for knowledge is an essential part of such an expansion.

The treatment of epistemology and methodology as problematic and

therefore not amenable to closely defined general programmes, is essential if the process of formulating experience is to involve a more realistic and open approach to addressing complexity and ambiguity. There is indeed a sense in which definition destroys meaning.

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION - THE ORIGINS AND BASIS OF
THE THESIS.

- 1 I.M.Lewis, Social Anthropology in Perspective, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976, p. 325.
- 2 E.E.Evans-Pritchard, The Nuer, Oxford University Press, 1940.
- 3 Magneto-hydrodynamic power generation concerns in particular the principle of electromagnetic induction by natural flow (of water etc) and has historical foundations in Faraday's observation of current induced by the flow of the river Thames.
- 4 But for a discussion of the duality of this role see, D.Golding, 'An attempt to gain commitment for Organisation Development in an Engineering Company In the North of England,' unpublished MSc Thesis, Sheffield City Polytechnic, 1977.
- 5 E.Gellner, 'Philosophy: The Social Context,' in, (ed) B.Magee, Men of Ideas, London, British Broadcasting Corporation, 1978, p.297.

CHAPTER TWO CONCEPTIONS OF THE NATURE AND STATUS OF
SOCIAL ENQUIRY.

- 1 J.O'Neill, Sociology as a Skin Trade, London, Heinemann, 1972.
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- 36 ibid., p.118.
- 37 ibid., p.131.
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- 40 See, B.Magee, Popper, London, Fontana, 1973, p.22.
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- 47 (ed) D.McLellan, Marx's Grundrisse, London, Paladin, 1973, but see, McLellan, Karl Marx: Selected Writings, op.cit., p.352.
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- 51 See, Keat and Urry, op.cit., p.97.
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- 73 See for example, A.Eisen, 'The meanings and confusions of Weberian "Rationality",' British Journal of Sociology, vol.29, no.1, March 1978.
- 74 See the discussion by Wright Mills, op.cit., pp.33-59.
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- 92 *ibid.*, p.13.
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- 97 I.Berlin, 'An Introduction to Philosophy', in, Magee, *Men of Ideas*, *op.cit.*, p.28.
- 98 C.Bernard, An Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine, New York, Dover Books, 1865, but see, P.Q.Hirst, Durkheim, Bernard and Epistemology, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, p.24.
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CHAPTER THREE

PROBLEMS OF KNOWLEDGE AND PROCEDURE IN
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- 13 See, Lehrer, op.cit., pp.12-21.
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- 18 For an analysis of the history of hermeneutics see, Z.Bauman, Hermeneutics and Social Science, London, Hutchinson, 1978, p.23-47.
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- 23 See, W.Outhwaite, Understanding Social Life. The Method called Verstehen, London, Allen and Unwin, 1975, p.29.
- 24 ibid.
- 25 Bauman, op.cit.
- 26 A.Giddens, New Rules of Sociological Method, London, Hutchinson, 1976.
- 27 Outhwaite, op.cit., p.16.
- 28 ibid, p.111.
- 29 Bauman, op.cit., p.21.
- 30 'Form of Life' is apparently taken by Bauman to refer to the 'human condition', but for an analysis of some of the conceptual problems of this expression, see, R.W.Whitley, 'Concepts of Organisation and Power in the study of Organisations', in, Personnel Review, vol.6, no.1, Winter 1977, pp.54-9. See also the discussion of this notion in the final section of this chapter.
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- 38 ibid., p.195.
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- 40 *ibid.*, p.224.
- 41 *ibid.*, p.239.
- 42 See, *ibid.*, p.239.
- 43 *ibid.*, p.246.
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- 47 *ibid.*, p.55.
- 48 *ibid.*, p.59.
- 49 *ibid.*, p.155.
- 50 *ibid.*, p.162.
- 51 I.Berlin, 'An Introduction to Philosophy', in, (ed), B.Magee, Men of Ideas, London, British Broadcasting Corporation, 1978, p.25.
- 52 E.Gellner, 'Philosophy: The Social Context', in, Magee, *op.cit.*, p.297.
- 53 E.Gellner, Legitimation of Belief, Cambridge University Press, 1974, p.206.
- 54 E.Gellner, 'A Wittgensteinian Philosophy of (or against) the Social Sciences', in, Philosophy of Social Science, vol.5, no.2, June 1975, pp.173-99.
- 55 P.Bourdieu, Outline of a Theory of Practice, Cambridge University Press, 1977, (trans. R.Nice), p.21.
- 56 *ibid.*, p.19.
- 57 The idea of using examples from memory, stems from the argument that since it is possible only to reproduce an account of an event, and not the actual event, then it is impossible to separate the observer's 'reading' of the event from his subsequent account (assuming communicative competence) of the event, even if the event is tape recorded and transcribed 'um' for 'er' - or even video recorded. It is still not the event itself and therefore cannot be used to expose the 'colouring' of the event by the observer. As Raffel has argued obsession with reliability can be seen as merely a manifestation of the frustration of not being able

to reproduce the event. This clearly results in criticism directed at reliability of observation of an event, instead of the more meaningful critical approach to the observer's 'reading' of the event. See, S.Raffel, Matters of Fact, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979, p.88.

- 58 See, (ed), P.Worsley, Introducing Sociology, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1970, p.95.
- 59 M.Dalton, Men Who Manage, New York, John Wiley, 1959.
- 60 Margaret Mead on BBC Horizon TV programme, 6th January 1979.
- 61 See, H.Garfinkel, 'The origins of the term "Ethnomethodology"', in, (ed), R.Turner, Ethnomethodology, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1974, pp.15-18.
- 62 For an illustration of this technique in historical analysis, see, R.Cobb, 'The tempting threshold', in, The Listener, vol.99, no.2554, 6th April 1978, pp.438-9.
- 63 This problem in fact presents a tension between what Schutz has called the, 'appearance of sufficient coherence' for a 'stranger' (ie me as observer in this case) observing an 'in group', and what Silverman and Jones have called 'transcending familiarity' for an observer who very soon becomes a part of the 'in group'. See, A.Schutz, Collected Papers -II, Studies in Social Theory, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1971, and D.Silverman, and J.Jones, Organisational Work, London, Collier-Macmillan, 1976, p.21.
- 64 For a discussion of the misnomers inherent in the traditional conception of bias as a methodological problem, see, P.McHugh, S.Raffel, D.C.Foss, and A.F.Blum, On the Beginning of Social Enquiry, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974, pp.47-75.
- 65 See, D.Silverman, Reading Castaneda, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, p.27.
- 66 'Own' in the sense of subscribing to a certain corpus of knowledge. See, W.W.Sharrock, 'On owning Knowledge', in, (ed), R.Turner, Ethnomethodology, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1974, pp.45-53. Ownership in this context is of course emergent and reflexive with 'reading' (ie making a certain reading of a piece of writing), see, P.Filmer, 'Garfinkel's Gloss', in, Writing Sociology, no.1, October 1976, pp.69-84. The complementary and reciprocal relationship between reading as explanation and reading as interpretation, is also central to this argument, see, D.M.Rasmussen, Mythic-Symbolic Language and Philosophical Anthropology, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1971, p.144. Thus the owning (or otherwise) of persuasive accounts in relation to the readers orientation to certain corpuses of knowledge (or theoretical traditions) is at the

heart of the problem of disentangling potential insights, truisms and confusions in the form of a dialogue between reader and writer.

CHAPTER FOUR THE SOCIOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK.

- 1 This chapter is based upon an earlier version previously published (with D.Jones) as, 'Power and Control', in, (ed), D.Ashton, Management Bibliographies and Reviews - Volume Four, Bradford, MCB Books, 1978, pp.103-115. In this earlier version, the detailed bibliography gives a more extensive coverage of the many writers who have carried out work under the various rubrics, in addition to the main writers, discussed in this chapter.
- 2 See the discussion of this issue in, (eds), S.Clegg, and D.Dunkerley, Critical Issues in Organisations, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977.
- 3 For a discussion of the synonymic/homonymic argument (in relation to the concept of structure) see, R.Boudon, The Uses of Structuralism, London, Heinemann, 1971.
- 4 M.Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation, London, Hodge, 1947, p.152.
- 5 R.Dahrendorf, Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society, Palo Alto, Stanford University Press, 1959, p.106.
- 6 See, R.W.Whitley, 'Concepts of Organisation and Power in the Study of Organisations', in, Personnel Review, vol.6, no.1, Winter 1977, pp.54-9.
- 7 P.M.Blau, Exchange and Power in Social Life, New York, John Wiley, 1967, p.117.
- 8 J.R.P.French, Jr., and B.H.Raven, 'The Bases of Social Power', in, (eds), B.L.Hinton, and H.J.Reitz, Groups and Organisations, Belmont California, Wadsworth, 1971, pp.190-7, but for a more extensive critique of this kind of typology see, P.D.Weldon, 'An Examination of the Blau-Scott and Etzioni Typologies: A Critique', in, Administrative Science Quarterly, vol.17, no.1, 1972, pp.76-8.
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- 10 H.A.Simon, Models of Man, New York, John Wiley, 1957, p.5.

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- 12 F.Hunter, Community Power Structure, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1953.
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- 14 D.J.Hickson, C.R.Hinings, C.A.Lee, R.E.Schneck, and J.M.Pennings, 'A Strategic Contingencies Theory of Intraorganisational Power', in, Administrative Science Quarterly, vol.16, no.2, pp.216-29.
- 15 (ed), E.F.L.Brech, The Principles and Practice of Management, London, Longmans, 1963.
- 16 J.Batty, Management Accountancy, London, Macdonald and Evans, 1963.
- 17 For a more detailed discussion of the idea of 'administrative logic' see, K.McNeil, 'Understanding Organisational Power: Building on the Weberian Legacy', in, Administrative Science Quarterly, vol.23, March 1978, pp.65-90.
- 18 R.Behrendt, 'Discussion on Herbert Marcuse's industrialisation and capitalism', in, (ed), O.Stammer, Max Weber and Sociology Today, Oxford, Blackwell, 1971, pp.175-83.
- 19 See for example, Blackburn's discussion in relation to market forces, R.Blackburn, 'The New Capitalism' in, (ed), Blackburn, Ideology and Social Science, London, Fontana, pp.164-86.
- 20 J.Child, 'Organisation Structure, Environment and Performance: The Role of Strategic Choice', in, Sociology, vol.6, 1972, pp.1-22.
- 21 Weber, op.cit.
- 22 But for a discussion of the problems of translation of 'Macht' and 'Herrschaft' as 'Power' and 'Authority' see, S.Clegg, Power Rule and Domination, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, and Whitley, op.cit.
- 23 But for a discussion of some of the problems of this typology see, R.Bendix, Max Weber: an intellectual portrait, London, Methuen, 1966.
- 24 Weber, op.cit., p.328.
- 25 F.E.Fiedler, A Theory of Leadership Effectiveness, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1967, p.23.

- 26 See, S.Beer, Cybernetics and Management, English Universities Press, 1959, and S.Beer, Brain of the Firm, London, The Professional Library, 1972.
- 27 See, H.A.Simon, Administrative Behaviour, New York, Macmillan, 1947.
- 28 K.Legge, Power, Innovation and Problem-Solving in Personnel Management, London, McGraw-Hill, 1978.
- 29 T.J.Watson, The Personnel Managers, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977.
- 30 Viz. the treatment Clegg (op.cit.) and of Hyman's work in industrial relations.
- 31 For a discussion of the idea of multiple rationalities see, L.Karpik, 'Technological Capitalism', in, (eds), Clegg and Dunkerley, op.cit., pp.41-70. For a discussion of the treatment of rationality in Weber's writings, see, A.Eisen, 'The Meanings and Confusions of Weberian "Rationality"', in, British Journal of Sociology, vol.29, no.1, March 1978.
- 32 Clegg, op.cit.
- 33 See Whitley's critique for instance, Whitley, op.cit., but see also the recapitulation of Clegg's arguments in, S.Clegg, The Theory of Power and Organisation, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979.
- 34 T.Parsons, 'On the concept of Political Power', in, Sociological Theory and Modern Society, New York, Free Press, 1967.
- 35 For a more detailed discussion of power in relation to the conflict/consensus argument see, R.Martin, The Sociology of Power, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977. See also, C.Wright Mills, The Power Elite, Oxford University Press, 1959.
- 36 See, Whitley, op.cit.
- 37 For a discussion of the idea of a separation between 'explanatory theory' and 'liberation theory' in Marxist schemas, see, C.Taylor, 'Marxist Philosophy', in, (ed), B.Magee, Men of Ideas, London, British Broadcasting Corporation, 1978, pp.44-58. The problem of what constitutes a Marxist perspective is also addressed in chapters two and five of this thesis.
- 38 P.Bourdieu, Outline of a Theory of Practice, Cambridge University Press, 1977, p.184.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE RIGHT TO MANAGE

- 1 This chapter is based upon an earlier version to be published as, 'Authority, Legitimacy and the Right to Manage at Wenslow Manufacturing Co.', in, Personnel Review, vol.9, no.1.
- 2 There are many problems in identifying who is to be included in the description, 'Manager'. See for instance the discussions in, R.Blackburn, 'The New Capitalism', in, (eds), G.Esland, G.Salaman, and M.A.Speakman, People and Work, Edinburgh, Holmes McDougall, 1975, pp.49-58, and J.Child, 'The Industrial Supervisor', in, ibid., pp.70-87. In this thesis the term manager will be used to refer both to those who would be regarded as managers (by virtue of having the title 'Manager' conferred organisationally) and to those who are inevitably involved in the process of management (eg Engineers, Directors, Assistant Managers, Foremen, Supervisors). Any differentiation felt to be significant will be highlighted in the various contexts encountered.
- 3 For discussions of the problems of 'media treatment' see, The Glasgow University Media Group, Bad News, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977, and J.Fiske, and J.Hartley, Reading Television, London, Methuen, 1978.
- 4 There are some exceptions, see for example, (eds), S.Clegg, and D.Dunkerley, Critical Issues in Organisations, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977. See also, G.Salaman, 'Towards a Sociology of Organisational Structure', in, The Sociological Review, vol.26, no.3, August 1978, pp.519-54, and R.Hyman, Strikes, London, Fontana, 1977.
- 5 M.Sohn-Rethel, 'Translators Forward', in, A.Sohn-Rethel, Intellectual and Manual Labour, London, Macmillan, 1978, p.ix.
- 6 ibid., p.x.
- 7 Ethnomethodologists particularly, have of course been concerned with redressing this neglect.
- 8 From, 'Leviathan', cited by, R.S.Peters, 'Authority - (1)', in, (ed), A.Quinton, Political Philosophy, Oxford University Press, 1967, p.83.
- 9 P.Winch, 'Authority - (2)', in, Quinton, ibid., p.99.
- 10 H.Garfinkel, Studies in Ethnomethodology, Englewood Cliffs New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1967, p.35.
- 11 A.Sohn-Rethel, op.cit., p.1.

- 12 For a further discussion of this problematic, see, P.Freund, and M.Abrams, 'Ethnomethodology and Marxism: their use for Critical Theorising', in, Theory and Society, vol.3, no.3, (Fall 1976), pp.377-93.
- 13 For a discussion of this perspective, see, M.Jay, The Dialectical Imagination, London, Heinemann, 1973, p.46.
- 14 See, K.McNeil, 'Understanding Organisational Power: Building on the Weberian Legacy', in, Administrative Science Quarterly, vol.23, March 1978, pp.65-90.
- 15 See for instance, D.Roy, 'Making-Out: A Counter System of Workers' Control of Work Situation and Relationships', in, (ed), T.Burns, Industrial Man, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1969, pp.359-79. For a more comprehensive treatment of the idea of 'resistance' being counterposed to 'control', see the recent study of, G.Salaman, Work Organisations Resistance and Control, London, Longman, 1979.
- 16 See for example, D.H.Zimmerman, 'Fact as a Practical Accomplishment', in, (ed), R.Turner, Ethnomethodology, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1974, pp.128-43.

CHAPTER SIX THE SOVEREIGNTY OF MANAGEMENT.

- 1 This chapter is based upon an earlier version previously published as, 'Symbolism, Sovereignty and Domination in an Industrial Hierarchical Organisation', in, The Sociological Review, vol.27, no.1, February 1979, pp.169-77.
- 2 E.E.Evans-Pritchard, 'The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk of the Nilotic Sudan', (The Fraser Lecture 1948), in, Evans-Pritchard, Essays in Social Anthropology, London, Faber and Faber, 1962, p.84.
- 3 *ibid.*, pp.84-5.
- 4 *ibid.*, pp.66-86.
- 5 J.Douglas, Understanding Everyday Life, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974, p.38.
- 6 See, A.Schutz, The Phenomenology of the Social World, North Western University Press, 1967, p.8.
- 7 G.M.Sykes, The Society of Captives, Princeton University Press, 1958, p.46.

- 8 The interpretation of philosophical problems as questions of a factual kind to be answered by psychology.
- 9 C.Levi-Strauss, The Savage Mind, London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1966, p.135.
- 10 P.Bourdieu, Outline of a Theory of Practice, Cambridge University Press, 1977, (trans. R.Nice), p.109.
- 11 M.Douglas, Natural Symbols, London, Barrie & Jenkins, 1973, p.173.
- 12 Bourdieu, op.cit., p.109.
- 13 See for example, D.J.Hickson, C.R.Hinings, C.A.Lee, R.E.Schneck, and J.M.Pennings, 'A Strategic Contingencies Theory of Intraorganisational Power', in, Administrative Science Quarterly, vol.16, no.2, 1971, pp.216-29.
- 14 A.Wassenburg, 'The Powerlessness of Organisation Theory', in, (eds), S.Clegg, and D.Dunkerley, Critical Issues in Organisations, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977, p.86.
- 15 M.Douglas, op.cit., p.11.
- 16 T.W.Adorno, 'Cultural Criticism and Society', in, (ed), P.Connerton, Critical Sociology, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976, pp.258-76.
- 17 F.Kafka, The Castle, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1957.
- 18 S.I.Benn, 'The Uses of "Sovereignty"', in, (ed), A.Quinton, Political Philosophy, Oxford University Press, 1967, pp.67-82.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ESTABLISHING 'BLISSFUL CLARITY'.

- 1 This chapter is based on an earlier version, 'On Being a Manager - The Paradox of "Addressing Complexity" and "Establishing Blissful Clarity" in Organisational Life', publication forthcoming.
- 2 S.Beckett, Waiting for Godot, London, Faber and Faber, 1956, p.79.
- 3 Necessary that is because the ontological status of human existence excludes the facility of omnipresence - it is physically impossible to address total reality at any point in time. The development of the view that the abstraction and simplification process is psychologically necessary is entirely another matter - concerning social ascription, which

process itself is perhaps part of the ontologically necessary abstraction and simplification process.

It may in fact be, that the very necessity of this abstraction and simplification process provides an ontological affinity for some of the more troublesome theoretical schemas concerned with the unconscious - for example the Marxist notion of false consciousness, and the psychoanalytic notions of schizoid mechanisms such as splitting and denial.

- 4 I.Berlin, 'An Introduction to Philosophy', in, (ed), B.Magee, Men of Ideas, London, British Broadcasting Corporation, pp.16-41.
- 5 R.Barthes, Mythologies, St.Albans, Paladin, 1973, p.143.
- 6 *ibid.*, p.142.
- 7 See, A.Sohn-Rethel, Intellectual and Manual Labour, London, Macmillan, 1978.
- 8 See for example, R.Hyman, Industrial Relations A Marxist Introduction, London, Macmillan, 1975.
- 9 See for example, K.McNeil, 'Understanding Organisational Power: Building on the Weberian Legacy', in, Administrative Science Quarterly, vol.23, March 1978, pp.65-90.
- 10 For a discussion of the contradictions between assumptions of causal determinism and assumptions of intentional change in this context, see, R.H.Brown, 'Bureaucracy as Praxis: Towards a Political Phenomenology of Formal Organisations', in, Administrative Science Quarterly, vol.23, September 1978, pp.365-382.
- 11 This is not to say that those in control have a monopoly in myth creation. Brown in fact has argued that the modern worker must make myths in an ad hoc manner, 'to reconcile the actual work processes with the official rhetoric of the organisation'. See, *ibid.*, p.372. This suggests the idea that members use myths to structure (manage) their everyday lives, thereby further clouding the access to derivation of shared myths, since members will probably experience this sharing in a multitude of incrementally different ways.
- 12 M.Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation, London, Hodge, 1947.
- 13 *ibid.*
- 14 See, H.Garfinkel, Studies in Ethnomethodology, Englewood Cliffs New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1967, p.21.

- 15 P.Bourdieu, Outline of a Theory of Practice, Cambridge University Press, 1977, (trans. R.Nice), p.164.
- 16 For an illuminating discussion of the idea of reciprocity in this context, see, B.Moore Jr., Injustice. The Social Bases of Obedience and Revolt, London, Macmillan, 1978.
- 17 Also a myth in the sense of 'making absolute', a particular historical development - even in the face of trends to articulate 'liberation'.
- 18 A.Cohen, Two Dimensional Man, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974, p.78. The relationship between myth and ideology is a complex one, and Sorel's traditional argument (see, G.Sorel, The Illusions of Progress, University of California Press, 1969, - trans. J.&C.Stanley) that they can be distinguished by the extent to which they are indestructible - myths are indestructible because they change by virtue of their own vagueness, whereas ideologies are surpassed because their rational characteristics give them a fixed quality - is unsatisfactory, to the extent that it assumes myth and ideology are always different phenomena. That may not be so. Myth is ideology and ideology is myth, in that both have positive (eg a belief founded in the rules produced by the abstraction and simplification process) and negative (eg unawareness of the effects of the abstraction and simplification process) qualities which are inseparable. Perhaps they can be usefully said to differ in some dimensions, to the extent that, for instance, those in control influence (ideologically) the myth formation, but such a differentiation is merely an underlining of the difference between positive and negative dimensions, whether myth or ideology is the subject. A more homonymic approach would be to ask, 'What does it mean to say that this is ideology? (or myth?)', to replace the universal antonymic question, 'What is the difference between.....' Ideology will be considered in greater detail in chapter nine.
- 19 In the sense of clouding the fact that control is being exercised - and legitimised.
- 20 J.J.Maquet, The Premise of Inequality in Ruanda, Oxford University Press, 1961.
- 21 Reported in, Cohen, op.cit., p.140.
- 22 Contradictions in the manner of the Chinese symbols denoting crises, one meaning danger and the other opportunity - and yet as Schroyer has pointed out, the two are perhaps one and the same. See, T.Schroyer, The Critique of Domination, New York, Brazillier, 1973. The real paradox is then the fact that far from being two separate and contradicting processes, the 'establishing of blissful clarity' is the 'addressing of complexity'.

- 23 Symptoms perhaps of the 'legitimation crisis' in capitalist societies (which is not to suggest that such crises could not occur in non-capitalist societies) that is so often represented as simply an economic crisis, resulting in - at best - invective towards establishing a more just economic order. For an elucidation of this idea see the review article, J.Rex, 'Legitimation, Ideology and Culture in Late Capitalist Societies', in, Sociology, vol.12, no.3, September 1978, pp.561-6.
- 24 The idea of 'role drift' developed here, owes much to D.Gowler, and his work on ascending, descending and lateral drift.

CHAPTER EIGHT MAINTAINING CUSTOMARY RELATIONS.

- 1 R.Firth, Symbols Public and Private, London, Allen and Unwin, 1973, p.90.
- 2 A.Cohen, Two Dimensional Man, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974, p.1.
- 3 M.Douglas, Natural Symbols, London, Barrie and Jenkins, 1973, p.21.
- 4 See, J.Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, London, Heinemann, 1976, (trans. T.McCarthy).
- 5 See, A.Cohen, op.cit., p.69.
- 6 P.Bourdieu, Outline of a Theory of Practice, Cambridge University Press, 1977, (trans. R.Nice), p.110.
- 7 ibid., p.112.
- 8 Z.Bauman, Hermeneutics and Social Science, London, Hutchinson, 1978, p.17, but see also chapter three of this thesis.
- 9 I.M.Lewis, Social Anthropology in Perspective, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976, p.51.
- 10 M.Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation, London, Hodge, 1947, but see, (ed), P.Worsley, Modern Sociology, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1970, p.392.
- 11 See for example, R.P.Gephart Jr., 'Status Degradation and Organisational Succession: An Ethnomethodological Approach', in, Administrative Science Quarterly, vol.23, December 1978, pp553-81. See also, H.Garfinkel, 'Conditions of Successful

Degradation Ceremonies', in, American Journal of Sociology, no.61, 1956, pp.420-4.

- 12 G.M.Sykes, The Society of Captives, Princeton University Press, 1958, p.58.
- 13 The ritualistic connotations of, 'It's her day' are perhaps best illustrated in the marriage ceremony of our society. The whole emphasis of the occasion is upon the bride (dress, attendants etc) and yet the ceremony can be seen as an underlining of male domination, in that the female is the one who is changing and losing most (eg her name). The elaborate ritual conceals this perspective however, and reproduces the action as a 'glorification'.

I am grateful to D.Gowler for this illumination, which certainly seems to me to echo something of the particular presentation of a twenty-five-year-award at Wenslow Manufacturing Co.

- 14 G.Cleverley, Managers and Magic, London, Longman, 1971, p.113.
- 15 D.Silverman, and J.Jones, Organisational Work, London, Collier-Macmillan, 1976.

CHAPTER NINE INSTITUTIONALISING CONTROL.

- 1 S.Lukes, Essays in Social Theory, London, Macmillan, 1977, p.13.
- 2 *ibid.*, p.14.
- 3 *ibid.*, pp.15-16.
- 4 *ibid.*, p.17.
- 5 *ibid.*, p.18.
- 6 *ibid.*, p.18.
- 7 *ibid.*, p.7. But see also the argument for a homonymic approach to such concepts, in chapter four of this thesis, and the discussion in relation to the concept of structure in, R.Boudon, The Uses of Structuralism, London, Heinemann, 1971.
- 8 Lukes, *op.cit.*, p.4.
- 9 See, G.Sorel, The Illusions of Progress, University of California Press, 1969, (trans. J.& C.Stanley).

- 10 Lukes (op.cit.) in fact goes on to discuss the somewhat intractable problems projected by the idea of 'rationality' in this context.
- 11 See, C.Levi-Strauss, Myth and Meaning, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978.
- 12 K.Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1936, but see, (ed), P.Worsley, Modern Sociology, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1970, p.25.
- 13 A.Giddens, '"Power" in the recent writings of Talcott Parsons', in, *ibid.*, p.461.
- 14 P.D.Anthony, The Ideology of Work, London, Tavistock, 1977, p.67.
- 15 *ibid.*, p.15.
- 16 *ibid.*, p.39.
- 17 *ibid.*, p.52.
- 18 *ibid.*, p.67.
- 19 *ibid.*, p.79.
- 20 T.Nichols, and H.Beynon, Living with Capitalism. Class Relations and the Modern Factory, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977, p.193.
- 21 See, D.Roy, 'Making-Out: A Counter System of Worker's Control of Work Situation and Relationships', in, (ed), T.Burns, Industrial Man, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1969, pp.359-79.
- 22 See, T.Nichols, Ownership, Control and Ideology, London, Allen and Unwin, 1969, p.52.
- 23 See, D.Dunkerley, Occupations and Society, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, p.36.
- 24 J.Larrain, The Concept of Ideology, London, Hutchinson, 1979.
- 25 A.W.Gouldner, The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology, London, Heinemann, 1971, p.293.
- 26 R.Hyman, Strikes, London, Fontana, 1977, p.92.
- 27 R.O'Day, 'Intimidation Rituals: Reactions to Reform', in, Journal of Applied Behavioural Science, vol.10, no.3, 1974, pp.373-86.

- 28 The work was carried out jointly with H.S.Gill, of the Department of Management Studies, Sheffield City Polytechnic.
- 29 See, H.Garfinkel, 'The Origins of the term "Ethnomethodology",' in, (ed), R.Turner, Ethnomethodology, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1974, pp.15-18.
- 30 But for a critique of his original delineation, see, A.Fox, 'Industrial Relations: A Social Critique of Pluralist Ideology', in, (eds), B.Barrett, E.Rhodes, and J.Beishon, Industrial Relations and the Wider Society, London, Collier-Macmillan, 1975, pp.302-24.
- 31 G.Simmel, The Sociology of Georg Simmel, New York, Free Press, 1950, but see, (eds), K.Thompson, and J.Tunstall, Sociological Perspectives, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1971, pp.80-2.

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